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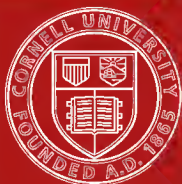
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BALLADS OF BABYLAND



from the Painting by Joshua Reynolds

BALLADS OF BABYLAND ENGLISH & AMERICAN

SELECTED AND EDITED
WITH NOTES

BY

ROBERT FORD

EDITOR OF

"BALLADS OF BAIRNHOOD"

"CHILDREN'S RHYMES, GAMES, SONGS, & STORIES"
ETC., ETC.



"What do they say in Babyland?
Why, the oddest things;
Might as well
Try to tell
What a birdie sings."

—GEORGE COOPER



PAISLEY: ALEXANDER GARDNER

Publisher by Appointment to the late Queen Victoria

1905

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To
My Only Sister
THE MEMORY OF WHOSE CHILDHOOD
AND MY OWN
DIRECTED BY A HAPPY, A WISE, AND A DEVOTED MOTHER
IN A LONELY COUNTRY VILLAGE
I HAVE CHERISHED
THROUGH ALL THE INTERVENING YEARS
AS AMONGST THE SWEETEST IN MY LIFE'S EXPERIENCES
I DEDICATE
WITH LOVING AND WELL-MERITED ESTEEM
THESE
Ballads of Babyland

PREFACE

IN 1894, when *Ballads of Bairnhood* appeared, more than one or two reviewers, while expressing the warmest appreciation of that exclusively Scottish anthology, suggested that the editor should follow it immediately with a companion volume embracing, in like manner, selections from the child-music of the English poets. It was a pleasing hint—no less a happy thought—and before long considerable progress was made with the preparation of the material. Other tasks, more urgent, interposed themselves, however, and the years rolled away without this not less agreeable one being accomplished. But the work, as may be seen, has not suffered by the delay. Yea, rather, it has gained, and because it embraces many excellent effusions which in the year of the “hint” were unavailable: and unavailable for the sufficient reason that they were yet unborn. Amongst these may be noted particularly “Playing at Paradise,” by Mr. Norman Gale; “Please, it’s only Me,” by the Rev. Walter J. Mathams; and “A Blessing for the Blessed,” by Miss Laurence Alma Tadema, any one of which was worth waiting for.

My inspirers, I admit, said English poets only. But by adding, as I have done, to the very cream of the child-songs that have been produced by the poets of England the most choice examples of the same music that have vibrated from the harps of the bards of America—some of whom have been prolific in this way, in the happiest manner possible—a collection has been made which, I am fain to believe, will commend itself with much favour to the wide, and daily widening circle to whom effusions of this tender and inspiring character are so dear as to be fondly cherished and sought after.

For the permission to include so many copyright songs and poems—without which such an ample and up-to-date collection were impossible—I have to acknowledge my indebtedness, with my thanks, to the various authors appealed to, most of whom replied immediately, readily granting the favour—many wishing success to the publication.

Equally with these authors I have to thank their publishers; and especially thanks are due, and are hereby gratefully acknowledged, to Messrs. Macmillan & Co.; George Routledge & Sons; Smith, Elder & Co.; and W. & R. Chambers, for their readily-granted permission to include selections from the published works of esteemed authors who within recent years have passed from songland to Songland.

Two or three pieces are included, the authors of which could not be traced. But they were too good to be left out; and the authors, when they discover them, we assume, will not feel inclined to dispute the fitness of their habitat.

Older readers will recognise with delight many of the familiar “gems” of the school-books of fifty years ago,—so many of them, alas! now only things of memory in occasional phrase and title.

For the purpose of easy reference, the selections have been printed in the alphabetical order of the authors' names.

The notes at the end, correspondingly arranged, have been placed with a view to emphasize the identity of the authors.

R. F.

287 ONSLOW DRIVE,
GLASGOW, October, 1905.

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BALLADS OF BABYLAND

LEEDLE YAWCOB STRAUSS.

I HAF von funny leedle poy
Vot gomes schust to mine knee ;
Der queerest schap, der greatest rogue,
As efer you dit see.

He runs und schumps, und schmashes dings
In all barts of der house ;
But vot off dot ? he vas mine son,
Mine leedle Yawcob Strauss.

He get der measles und der mumbs,
Und eferyding dot's out ;
He sbills mine glass of lager beer,
Puts schnuff into mine kraut.

He fills mine pipe mit Limburg cheese—
Dot was der roughest chouse ;
I'd dake dot from no oder poy
But leedle Yawcob Strauss.

He dakes der milk-can for a dhrum,
Und cuts mine cane in dwo,
To make der schticks to beat it mit—
Mine gracious, dot vos drue !

I dinks mine hed was schplit abart,
He kicks oup sooch a touse ;
But never mind ; der poys was few
Like dot young Yawcob Strauss.

He asks me questions such as dese :
Who baints mine nose so red ?
Who vas it cuts dot schmoodth blace oudt
Vrom der hair ubon mine hed ?

Und vhere der plaze goes vrom der lamp
Vene'er der glim I douse,
How can I all dose dings eggsblain
To dot schmall Yawcob Strauss ?

I sometimes dink I schall go vild
Mit sooch a grazzy poy,
Und vish vonce more I Gould haf rest,
Und beaceful dime enshoy ;

But ven he vash asleep in ped,
So quiet as a mouse,
I prays der Lord, "Dake anyding,
But leaf dot Yawcob Strauss."

CHARLES FOLLEN ADAMS.



DOT BABY OFF MINE.

MINE gracious ! Mine gracious ! shust look here und see
A Deutscher so habby as habby can pe.
Der beoples all dink dot no prains I haf got.
Vas grazzy mit trinking, or someding like dot,
Id vasn't because I trinks lager und vine,
Id vas all on account of dot baby off mine.

Dot schmall leedle vellow I dells you vas queer ;
Nor mooch pigger roundt as a goot glass off beer,

Mit a bare-footed hed, und nose but a schpeck,
A mout dot goes most to der pack of his neck,
Und his leedle pink toes mit der rest all combine
To gife sooch a charm to dot baby off mine.

I dells you dot baby vos von of der boys,
Und beats leedle Yawcob for making a noise ;
He shust has pegun to shbeak goot English, too,
Says "mamma," and "bapa," and sometimes "ah—
goo !"

You don't find a baby den dimes out off nine
Dot vos quite so schmart as dot baby off mine.

He grawls der vloer ofer und drows ding aboutt
Und poots everyding he can find in his mout ;
He dumbles der shtairs down, und falls vrom his chair,
Und gives mine Katrina von derrible skare ;
Mine hair shtands like squills on a mat borcubine
Ven I dinks off dose pranks off dot baby off mine.

Der vas someding, you pet, I don't likes pooty vell,
To hear in der night dimes dot young Deutscher yell,
Und dravel der ped-room midout many clo'es
While der chills down der shpine off mine back quickly
goes ;

Dose leedle shimnastic dricks vasn't so fine,
Dot I cuts oop at night mit dot baby off mine.

Vell, dese leedle schafers vas goin' to be men,
Und all of dese droubles vill peen ofer den ;
Dey vill veare a white shirt vront inshted off a bib,
Und wouldn't got tucked oop at night in deir crib.
Vell ! Vell ! ven I'm feeble und in life's decline,
May mine oldt age pe cheered py dot baby off mine.

CHARLES FOLLEN ADAMS.

ROCK ME TO SLEEP.

BACKWARD, turn backward, O Time ! in your flight,
Make me a child again, just for to-night !
Mother, come back from the echoless shore,
Take me again to your heart as of yore ;
Kiss from my forehead the furrows of care,
Smooth the few silver threads out of my hair ;
Over my slumbers your loving watch keep—
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep !

Backward, flow backward, O tide of the years !
I am so weary of toil and of tears—
Toil without recompense, tears all in vain—
Take them, and give me my childhood again !
I have grown weary of dust and decay,
Weary of flinging my soul-wealth away ;
Weary of sowing for others to reap—
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep !

Tired of the hollow, the base, the untrue,
Mother, O mother, my heart calls for you !
Many a summer the grass has grown green,
Blossom'd and faded, our faces between :
Yet, with strong yearning and passionate pain,
Long I to-night for your presence again.
Come from the silence so long and so deep—
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep !

Over my heart, in the days that are flown,
No love like mother-love ever has shone ;
No other worship abides and endures,
Faithful, unselfish, and patient like yours :

A

None like a mother can charm away pain
From the sick soul and the world-weary brain.
Slumber's soft calms o'er my heavy lids creep—
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep !

Come, let your brown hair, just lighted with gold,
Fall on your shoulders again as of old ;
Let it drop over my forehead to-night,
Shading my faint eyes away from the light ;
For with its sunny-edged shadows once more
Haply will throng the sweet visions of yore ;
Lovingly, softly, its bright billows sweep—
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep !

Mother, dear mother, the years have been long
Since I last listen'd to your lullaby song :
Sing, then, and unto my soul it shall seem
Womanhood's years have been only a dream.
Clasp'd to your heart in a loving embrace,
With your light lashes just sweeping my face,
Never hereafter to wake or to weep—
Rock me to sleep, mother, rock me to sleep !

ELIZABETH AKERS.



BABY BELL.

I.

HAVE you not heard the poets tell
How came the dainty Baby Bell
Into this world of woe ?
The gates of Heaven were left ajar :

With folded hands and dreamy eyes,
Wandering out of Paradise,
She saw this planet like a star,
Hung in the depth of even—
Its bridges, running to and fro,
O'er which the white-winged Angels go,
Bearing the holy Dead to Heaven !
She touched a bridge of flowers—her feet,
So light they did not bend the bells
Of the celestial asphodels !
They fell like dew upon the flowers,
And all the air grew strangely sweet !
And thus came dainty Baby Bell
Into this world of ours.

II.

She came and brought delicious May.
The swallows built beneath the eaves ;
Like sunlight in and out the leaves,
The robin went, the livelong day ;
The lily swung its noiseless bell,
And o'er the porch the trembling vine
Seemed bursting with its veins of wine.
How sweetly, softly twilight fell !
O, earth was full of singing birds,
And happy spring-tide flowers,
When the dainty Baby Bell
Came to this world of ours.

III.

O Baby, dainty Baby Bell,
How fair she grew from day to day !
What woman-nature filled her eyes,
What poetry within them lay !

Those deep and tender twilight eyes,
So full of meaning, pure and bright,
As if she yet stood in the light
Of those oped gates of Paradise !
And we loved Baby more and more :
Ah, never in our hearts before
Was love so lovely born :
We felt we had a link between
This real world and that unseen—
The land beyond the morn !
And for the love of those dear eyes,
For love of her whom God led forth
(The mother's being ceased on earth
When Baby come from Paradise),
For love of Him who smote our lives,
And woke the chords of joy and pain,
We said, " Sweet Christ ! "—our hearts bent down
Like violets after rain.

IV.

And now the orchards, which in June
Were white and rosy in their bloom—
Filling the crystal veins of air
With gentle pulses of perfume—
Were rich in Autumn's mellow prime :
The plums were globes of honeyed wine,
The hived sweets of summer time !
The ivory chestnut burst its shell ;
The soft-cheeked peaches blushed and fell ;
The grapes were purpling in the grange,
And time brought just as rich a change
In little Baby Bell.

Her tiny form more perfect grew,
And in her features we could trace,
In softened curves, her mother's face !
Her angel-nature ripened too.
We thought her lovely when she came,
But she was holy, saintly now . . .
Around her pale angelic brow
We saw a slender ring of flame !

v.

God's hand had taken away the seal
Which held the portals of her speech ;
And oft she said a few strange words
Whose meaning lay beyond our reach.
She never was a child to us ;
We never held her being's key :
We could not teach her holy things ;
She was Christ's self in purity !

vi.

It came upon us by degrees ;
We saw its shadow ere it fell,
The knowledge that our God had sent
His messenger for Baby Bell.
We shuddered with unlanguage'd pain,
And all our hopes were changed to fears,
And all our thoughts ran into tears
Like sunshine into rain.
We cried aloud in our behalf,
" O, smite us gently, gently, God !
Teach us to bend and kiss the rod,

And perfect grow through grief!"
Ah, how we loved her, God can tell;
Her little heart was cased in ours:
Our hearts are broken, Baby Bell!

VII.

At last he came, the messenger,
The messenger from unseen lands:
And what did dainty Baby Bell?
She only crossed her little hands,
She only looked more meek and fair!
We parted back her silken hair;
We laid some buds upon her brow,
White buds like summer's drifted snow—
Death's bride arrayed in flowers!
And thus went dainty Baby Bell,
Out of this world of ours!

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH.



**NOW THEY'LL HAVE ENOUGH
OF FOOD.**

Said a poor little girl in the fourth ward of New York, as she was dying, "I'm glad I'm going to die, because now my brothers and sisters will have enough to eat!"

WITHIN a hospital there lay
A suffering child upon a bed;
The kindly doctor passed that way,
He felt her pulse—he shook his head.

The silent sign—the pitying look—
Did not escape her watching eye !
Her heart the mournful warning took,
She felt—she knew that she must die.

The mother came to see her child,
And heard the fiat of her doom ;
Her wail was loud, her grief was wild,
She could not yield her to the tomb.

“ Dear mother ! do not weep for me,”
The gentle, patient sufferer cried ;
“ You’ve had hard work to feed us three,
And clothe us, too, since father died.

“ There’s scarce been food enough for all
When you have done your very best ;
Oh ! how I wanted to grow tall,
That I could work to help the rest.

“ But I am little, weak, and thin,
The least thing made my limbs to ache ;
Mother ! I hope ’tis not a sin,
I’m glad I’m dying for your sake.

“ Brother and sister will be good,
They’ll help and comfort you, you’ll see ;
And now they’ll have enough of food ;
You’ll have but two instead of three.

“ And mother ! I am going home,
Plenty and happiness to share ;
Mother ! you’ll all be sure to come ?
There’s neither thirst nor hunger there.

“ Father and I will watch for you—
Willie—and you—and little Jane,
And when you get to heaven too,
Dear mother, we shall meet again.”

E. C. A. ALLEN.



THE FAIRIES.

UP the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men ;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together,
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather !

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home ;
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam ;
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old King sits :
He is now so old and grey,
He's nigh lost his wits.

With a bridge of white mist
Columbkil he crosses
On his stately journeys
From Slieveleague to Rosses ;
Or going up, with music,
On cold, starry nights,
To sup with the Queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long ;
When she came down again
Her friends were all gone.
They took her lightly back
Between the night and morrow ;
They thought that she was fast asleep,
But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
Deep within the lakes,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
Watching till she wakes.

By the craggy hill-side,
Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
As dig them up in spite,
He shall find their sharpest thorns
In his bed at night.

Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
For fear of little men ;

Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together ;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather !

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.



HALF-WAKING.

I THOUGHT it was the little bed
I slept in long ago ;
A straight, white curtain at the head,
And two smooth knobs below.

I thought I saw the nursery fire,
And in a chair, well-known,
My mother sat, and did not tire
With reading all alone.

If I should make the slightest sound
To show that I'm awake,
She'd rise, and lap the blankets round,
My pillow softly shake ;

Kiss me, and turn my face to see
The shadows on the wall,
And then sing *Rousseau's Dream* to me,
Till fast asleep I fall.

But this is not my little bed ;
That time is far away ;
'Mong strangers cold I live instead,
From dreary day to day.

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

ROBIN REDBREAST.

GOOD-BYE, good-bye to Summer !
For Summer's nearly done ;
The garden smiling faintly,
Cool breezes in the sun ;
Our Thrushes now are silent,
Our Swallows flown away—
But Robin's here, in coat of brown,
And ruddy breast-knot gay.

Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin, dear !
Robin singing sweetly,
In the falling of the year.

Bright yellow, red, and orange,
The leaves come down in hosts ;
The trees are Indian Princes,
But soon they'll turn to Ghosts ;
The scanty pears and apples
Hang russet on the bough ;
It's Autumn, Autumn, Autumn late,
'Twill soon be Winter now.

Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin, dear !
And welaway ! my Robin,
For pinching times are near.

The fireside for the Cricket,
The wheatstack for the Mouse,
When trembling night-winds whistle
And moan all round the house ;

The frosty ways like iron,
The branches plumed with snow—
Alas ! in Winter, dead and dark,
Where can poor Robin go ?

Robin, Robin Redbreast,
O Robin, dear !
And a crumb of bread for Robin,
His little heart to cheer.

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.



FAY.

LITTLE Fay, than a bird more tender,
Frail as a reed, as a reed is, slender ;
All the flowers in the hedgerows love her.
You may see, if you choose, the daisies
Look up, blushing, in grassy places,
Full of joy as her feet trip over.

Such wild lights in her shy eyes lighten,
Flash, and flicker, and darken, brighten ;
Her white brow 'mid her sunny hair is
Set so smoothly, and set so purely,
You divine how she must be, surely,
Changeling come from a land of fairies.

Do we tremble—who know she chances
On what friends, in her dreams and trances—
Lest they claim her, who've nine years lent her ?
Will they trouble to lift a finger
Just for a sign, if she wills to linger ?
We'll so love her, we shall content her.

THOMAS ASHE.

THE MOTHER'S DREAM.

I'd a dream to-night
As I fell asleep,
Oh ! the touching sight
Makes me still to weep—
Of my little lad,
Soon to leave me sad,
Aye, the child I had,
But was not to keep.

As in heaven high,
I my child did seek,
There, in train, came by
Children fair and meek ;
Each in lily white,
With a lamp alight ;
Each was clear to sight,
But they did not speak.

Then, a little sad,
Came my child in turn,
But the lamp he had,
Oh ! it did not burn ;
He, to clear my doubt,
Said, half-turned about,
“ Your tears put it out ;
Mother, never mourn.”

WILLIAM BARNES.



LULLABY.

THE rook's nests do rock on the tree-top,
Where few foes can stand ;
The martin's is high, and is deep
In the steep cliff of sand ;
But thou, love, a-sleeping where footsteps
Might come to thy bed,
Hast father and mother to watch thee
And shelter thy head.
Lullaby, Lilybrow, lie asleep ;
Blest be thy rest.

And some birds do keep under roofing
Their young from the storm ;
And some wi' nest-hoodings o' moss
And o' wool, do lie warm.
And we will look well to the house-roof
That o'er thee might leak,
And the blast that might beat on thy window
Shall not smite thy cheek.
Lullaby, Lilybrow, lie asleep ;
Blest be thy rest.

WILLIAM BARNES.



BABY MAY.

CHEEKS as soft as July peeches ;
Lips whose dewy scarlet teaches
Poppies paleness ; round large eyes
Ever great with new surprise.

Minutes fill'd with shadeless gladness,
Minutes just as brimmed with sadness,
Happy smiles and wailing cries,
Crows and laughs and tearful eyes,
Lights and shadows swifter born
Than on wind-swept autumn corn.
Ever some new tiny notion,
Making every limb all motion,
Catchings up of legs and arms,
Throwings back and small alarms,
Clutching fingers—straightening jerks,
Twining feet whose each toe works,
Kickings up and straining risings,
Mother's ever new surprisings,
Hands all wants and looks all wonder
At all things the heavens under.
Tiny scorns of smiled reprovings
That have more of love than lovings,
Mischiefs done with such a winning
Archness, that we prize such sinning.
Breakings dire of plates and glasses,
Graspings small at all that passes,
Pullings off of all that's able
To be caught from tray or table.
Silences—small meditations
Deep as thoughts of cares for nations,
Breaking into wisest speeches
In a tongue that nothing teaches,
All the thoughts of whose possessing
Must be wooed to light by guessing.
Slumbers—such sweet angel-seemings
That we'd ever have such dreamings,
Till from sleep we see thee breaking,
And we always have thee waking.

Wealth for which we know no measure,
Pleasure high above all pleasure,
Gladness brimming over gladness,
Joy in care—delight in sadness,
Loveliness beyond completeness,
Sweetness distancing all sweetness,
Beauty all that beauty may be,
That's May Bennet—that's my baby.

W. C. BENNETT.



BABY'S SHOES.

Oh those little, those little blue shoes !
Those shoes that no little feet use.
 Oh the price were high
 That those shoes would buy,
Those little blue, unused shoes !

For they hold the small shape of feet
That no more their mother's eyes meet,
 That, by God's good will,
 Years since, grew still,
And ceased from their totter so sweet.

And oh, since that baby slept,
So hush'd, how the mother has kept,
 With a tearful pleasure,
 That little dear treasure,
And o'er them thought and wept !

For they mind her for evermore
Of a patter along the floor ;
 And blue eyes she sees
 Look up from her knees,
With the look that in life they wore.

As they lie before her there,
There babbles from chair to chair
 A little sweet face
 That's a gleam in the place,
With its little gold curls of hair.

Then oh, wonder not that her heart
From all else would rather part,
 Than those tiny blue shoes
 That no little feet use,
And whose sight makes such fond tears start !

W. C. BENNETT.



THE PIPER.

PIPING down the valleys wild,
 Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
 And he, laughing, said to me :—

“ Pipe a song about a lamb ! ”
 So I piped with merry cheer.
“ Piper, sing that song again ; ”
 So I piped : he wept to hear.

“ Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe ;
Sing thy song of happy cheer ! ”
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

“ Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read. ”
So he vanished from my sight ;
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs,
Every child may joy to hear.

WILLIAM BLAKE.



THE LITTLE BLACK BOY.

My mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but oh, my soul is white !
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And, sitting down, before the heat of day,
She took me in her lap and kissed me,
And, pointing to the East, began to say :

“ Look on the rising sun : there God does live,
And gives His light, and gives His heat away ;
And flowers, and trees, and beasts, and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

“ And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love ;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face,
Are but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

“ For when our souls have learned the heat to bear,
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear His voice,
Saying, ‘ Come out from the grove, my love and care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.’ ”

Thus did my mother say, and kissèd me,
And thus I say to little English boy.
When I from black, and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee ;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.

WILLIAM BLAKE.



NURSE'S SONG.

WHEN the voices of children are heard on the green,
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast,
And everything else is still.

Then come home, my children, the sun is gone down,
And the dews of night arise ;
Come, come, leave off play, and let us away
Till the morning appears in the skies.

No, no, let us play, for it is yet day,
And we cannot go to sleep;
Besides, in the sky, the little birds fly,
And the hills are all covered with sheep.

Well, well, go and play, till the light fades away,
And then go home to bed.
The little ones leap'd, and shouted, and laugh'd;
And all the hills echo'd.

WILLIAM BLAKE.



THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER.

A LITTLE black thing among the snow,
Crying, "Weep! weep!" in tones of woe!
"Where are thy father and mother? Say!"—
"They are both gone up to the church to pray.

"Because I was happy upon the heath,
And smiled among the winter's snow,
They clothed me in the clothes of death,
And taught me to sing the notes of woe.

"And because I am happy, and dance, and sing,
They think they have done me no injury,
And are gone to praise God and His priest and king,
Who make up a heaven of our misery."

WILLIAM BLAKE.



A CRADLE SONG.

SWEET dreams, form a shade
O'er my lovely infant's head ;
Sweet dreams of pleasant streams
By happy, silent, moony beams.

Sweet sleep, with soft down,
Weave thy brows an infant crown.
Sweet sleep, angel mild,
Hover o'er my happy child.

Sweet smiles in the night
Hover over my delight ;
Sweet smiles, mother's smiles,
All the livelong night beguiles.

Sweet moans, dove-like sighs,
Chase not slumber from thy eyes.
Sweet moans, sweeter smiles,
All the dove-like moans beguiles.

Sleep, sleep, happy child,
All creation slept and smiled ;
Sleep, sleep, happy sleep,
While o'er thee thy mother weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace.
Sweet babe, once like thee
Thy Maker lay and wept for me—

Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When He was an infant small.
Thou His image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee—

Smiles on thee, on me, on all ;
Who became an infant small.
Infant smiles are His own smiles ;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.

WILLIAM BLAKE.



THE STREET CHILDREN'S DANCE.

Now the earth in fields and hills
Stirs with pulses of the Spring,
Nest-embowering hedges ring
With interminable trills ;
Sunlight runs a race with rain,
All the world grows young again.

Young as at the hour of birth :
From the grass the daisies rise
With the dew upon their eyes,
Sun-awakened eyes of earth ;
Fields are set with cups of gold ;
Can this budding world grow old ?

Can the world grow old and sere,
Now when ruddy-tasselled trees
Stoop to every passing breeze,
Rustling in their silken gear ;
Now when blossoms pink and white
Have their own celestial light ?

Brooding light falls soft and warm,
Where in many a wind-rocked nest,
Curled up 'neath the she-bird's breast,
Clustering eggs are hid from harm ;
While the mellow-throated thrush
Warbles in the purpling bush.

Misty purple bathes the Spring :
Swallows flashing here and there
Float and dive on waves of air.
And make love upon the wing ;
Crocus-buds in sheaths of gold
Burst like sunbeams from the mould.

Chestnut leaflets burst their buds,
Perching tiptoe on each spray,
Springing toward the radiant day,
As the bland, pacific floods
Of the generative sun
All the teeming earth o'errun.

Can this earth run o'er with beauty,
Laugh through leaf and flower and grain,
While in close-pent court and lane,
In the air so thick and sooty,
Little ones pace to and fro,
Weighted with their parent's woe ?

Woe-predestined little ones !
Putting forth their buds of life
In an atmosphere of strife,
And crime-breeding ignorance ;
Where the bitter surge of care
Freezes to a dull despair.

Dull despair and misery
Lie about them from their birth ;
Ugly curses, uglier mirth,
Are their earliest lullaby ;
Fathers have they without name,
Mothers crushed by want and shame.

Brutish, overburdened mothers,
With their hungry children cast
Half-nude to the nipping blast ;
Little sisters with their brothers
Dragging in their arms all day
Children nigh as big as they.

Children withered by the street :
Shouting, flouting, roaring after
Passers-by with gibes and laughter,
Diving between horses' feet,
In and out of drays and barrows,
Recklessly, like London sparrows.

Mudlarks of our slums and alleys,
All unconscious of the blooming
World beyond these housetops looming,
Of the happy fields and valleys,
Of the miracle of Spring,
With its boundless blossoming.

Blossoms of humanity !
Poor soiled blossoms in the dust !
Through the thick defiling crust
Of soul-stifling poverty,
In your features may be traced
Children's beauty, half effaced—

Childhood, stunted in the shadow
Of the light-debarring walls :
Not for you the cuckoo calls
O'er the silver-threaded meadow ;
Not for you the lark on high
Pours his music from the sky.

Ah ! you have your music too !
And come flocking round that player
Grinding at his organ there,
Summer-eyed and swart of hue,
Rattling off his well-worn tune
On this April afternoon.

Lovely April lights of pleasure
Flit o'er want-beclouded features
Of those little outcast creatures,
As they swing with rhythmic measure,
In the courage of their rags,
Lightly o'er the slippery flags.

Little footfalls, lightly glancing
In a luxury of motion,
Supple as the waves of ocean,
In your elemental dancing,
How you fly, and wheel, and spin,
For your hearts, too, dance within !

Dance along with mirth and laughter,
Buoyant, fearless, and elate,
Dancing in the teeth of fate,
Ignorant of your hereafter,
That with all its tragic glooms
Blinding on your future looms.

Past and future, hence away !
Joy, diffused through all the earth,
Centre in this moment's mirth
Of ecstatic holiday :
Once in all their live's dark story,
Touch them, Fate ! with April glory !

MATHILDE BLIND.



A SWEET LULLABY.

COME, little babe ! come, silly soul !
Thy father's shame, thy mother's grief :
Born, as I doubt, to all our dole,
And to thyself unhappy chief ;
Sing lullaby, and lap it warm,
Poor soul that thinks no creature harm !

Thou little think'st and less dost know
The cause of all thy mother's moan ;
Thou want'st the wit to wail her woe,
And I myself am all alone.
Why dost thou weep ? Why dost thou wail ?
And know'st not yet what thou dost ail.

Come, little wretch ! ah, silly heart !
Mine only joy ! What can I more ?
If there be any wrong thy smart,
That may the destinies implore—
'Twas I, I say, against my will ;
I wail the time, but be thou still !

And dost thou smile? O thy sweet face!
Would God himself he might thee see:
No doubt thou would'st soon purchase grace,
I know right well, for thee and me.
But come to Mother, Babe! and play:
For father, false, is fled away.

NICHOLAS BRETON.



LITTLE THINGS.

LITTLE drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the pleasant land.

Thus the little minutes,
Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
Of eternity.

Thus our little errors
Lead the soul away
From the paths of virtue,
Far in sin to stray.

Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Make our life an Eden,
Like the heaven above.

Little seeds of mercy
Sown by youthful hands,
Grow to bless the nations
Far in heathen lands.

EBENEZER COBBAM BREWER.

NEIGHBOUR NELLY.

I'm in love with neighbour Nelly,
Though I know she's only ten,
While, alas ! I'm eight-and-forty,—
And the marriedest of men !
I've a wife who weighs me double,
I've three daughters all with beaux ;
I've a son with noble whiskers,
Who at me turns up his nose—

Though a square-toes, and a fogley,
Still I've sunshine in my heart ;
Still I'm fond of cakes and marbles,
Can appreciate a tart—
I can love my neighbour Nelly,
Just as tho' I were a boy ;
I could hand her nuts and apples
From my depths of corduroy.

She is tall, and growing taller,
She is vigorous of limb :
(You should see her play at cricket
With her little brother Jim.)
She has eyes as blue as damsons,
She has pounds of auburn curls,
She regrets the game of leap-frog
Is prohibited to girls.

I adore my neighbour Nelly,
I invite her into tea ;
And I let her nurse the baby—
All her pretty ways to see.

Such a darling bud of woman,
Yet remote from any teens,—
I have learnt from baby Nelly
What the girl's doll instinct means.

Oh ! to see her with the baby !
He adores her more than I,—
How she choruses his crowing,—
How she hushes every cry !
How she loves to pit his dimples
With her light forefinger deep,
How she boasts to me in triumph,
When she's got him off to sleep !

We must part, my neighbour Nelly,
For the summers quickly flee ;
And your middle-aged admirer
Must supplanted quickly be.
Yet as jealous as a mother,—
A distemper'd, canker'd churl,
I look vainly for the setting
To be worthy such a pearl.

ROBERT B. BROUGH.



MEASURING THE BABY.

WE measured the riotous baby
Against the cottage wall—
A lily grew at the threshold,
And the boy was just as tall !

A royal tiger lily,
With spots of purple and gold,
And a heart like a jewelled chalice,
The fragrant dew to hold.

Without, the blackbirds whistled
High up in the old root trees,
And to and fro at the window
The red rose rocked her bees ;
And the wee pink fists of the baby
Were never a moment still,
Snatching at the shine and shadow,
That danced on the lattice-sill !

His eyes were wide as blue-bells—
His mouth like a flower unblown—
Two little bare feet, like funny white mice,
Peeped out from his snowy gown ;
And we thought with a thrill of rapture
That yet had a touch of pain,
When June rolls around with her roses,
We'll measure the boy again.

Ah me ! In a darkened chamber,
With the sunshine shut away,
Through tears that fell like bitter rain,
We measured the boy to-day ;
And the little bare feet that were dimpled,
And sweet as a budding rose,
Lay side by side together,
In the hush of a long repose ;

Up from the dainty pillow,
White as the risen dawn,
The fair little face lay smiling,
With heaven's light o'er it drawn.

And the dear little hands, like rose-leaves
Dropped from a rose, lay still,
Never to snatch at the sunshine
That crept to the shrouded sill !

We measured the sleeping baby
With ribbons white as snow,
For the shining rosewood casket
That waited for him below ;
And out of the darkened chamber
We went with a childish moan—
To the height of the sinless angels
Our little one had grown !

R. A. BROWNE.



MY CHILD.

MY child, we were two children,
Small, merry by childhood's law ;
We used to crawl to the hen-house
And hide ourselves in the straw.

We crowed like cocks, and whenever
The pursuers near us drew—
Cock-a-doodle doo ! they thought
'Twas a real cock that crew.

The boxes about our courtyard
We carpeted to our mind,
And lived there both together—
Kept house in a noble kind.

The neighbour's old cat often
Came to pay us a visit ;
We made her a bow and curtsey,
Each with a compliment in it.

After her health we asked,
Our care and regard to evince—
(We have made the very same speeches
To many an old cat since).

We also sate and wisely
Discoursed, as old folks do,
Complaining how all went better
In these good old times we knew—

How love, and truth, and believing,
Had left the world to itself,
And how so dear was the coffee,
And how so scarce was the pelf.

The children's games are over,
The rest is over with youth—
The world, the good games, the good times,
The belief, and the love, and the truth.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.



THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their
mothers,
And *that* cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing toward the west—
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly !
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,
Why their tears are falling so ?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in Long Ago.
The old tree is leafless in the forest,
The old year is ending in the frost,
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,
The old hope is hardest to be lost.
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy Fatherland.

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy.
“ Your old earth,” they say, “ is very dreary ;
Our young feet,” they say, “ are very weak !
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children ;
For the outside earth is cold ;
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old.”

“True,” say the children, “it may happen
That we die before our time.
Little Alice died last year—her grave is shapen
Like a snowball, in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her,
Was no room for any work in the close clay !
From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,
Crying, ‘Get up, little Alice, it is day.’”
If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries.
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes.
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud by the kirk-chime !
“It is good when it happens,” say the children,
“That we die before our time.”

Alas, alas, the children ! they are seeking
Death in life, as best to have.
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement from a grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do.
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty,
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through !
But they answer, are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds a-near the mine ?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine !

“For oh,” say the children, “we are weary
And we cannot run or leap.
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them and sleep.

Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
We fall upon our faces, trying to go ;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow.
For, all day, we drag our burdens tiring
Through the coal-dark, underground—
Or all day we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

“ For, all day, the wheels are droning, turning—
Their wind comes in our faces—
Till our hearts turn—our head, with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places.
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
Turns the long light that droops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we could pray,
‘ O ye wheels ’ (breaking out in mad moaning),
‘ Stop ! be silent for to-day ! ’ ”

Ay ! be silent ! Let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth !
Let them touch each other’s hands, in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth !
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals,
Let them prove their living souls against the notion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels !—
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark ;
And the children’s souls, which God is calling sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
To look up to Him and pray ;
So the blessed One who blesseth all the others,
Will bless them another day.
They answer, " Who is God that He should hear us,
While the rushing of the iron wheel is stirred ?
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us,
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.
And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
Strangers speaking at the door.
Is it likely God, with angels singing round him,
Hears our weeping any more ?

" Two words, indeed, of praying we remember,
And at midnight's hour of harm,
' Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
We say softly for a charm.
We know no other words, except ' Our Father,'
And we think that, in some pause of angels' song,
God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
And hold both within his right hand which is strong.
' Our Father ! ' if He heard us, He would surely
(For they call Him good and mild)
Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
' Come and rest with me, my child.' "

" But no ! " say the children, weeping faster,
" He is speechless as a stone.
And they tell us of His image is the master
Who commands us to work on.
Go to ! " say the children—" up in Heaven,
Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
Do not mock us ; grief has made us unbelieving—
We look up for God, but tears have made us blind."

Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
O my brothers, what ye preach?
For God's possible is taught by His world's loving,
And the children doubt of each.

And well may the children weep before you !
They are weary ere they run.
They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory,
Which is brighter than the sun.
They know the grief of man, without his wisdom ;
They sink in man's despair, without its calm ;
Are slaves, without the liberty in Christdom,
Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm—
Are worn, as if with age, yet unretrievably
The harvest of its memories cannot reap—
Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly.
Let them weep ! let them weep !

They look up, with their pale and sunken faces,
And their look is dread to see,
For they mind you of their angels in high places,
With eyes turned on Deity !
“ How long,” they say, “ how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand, to move the world, on a child's heart—
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
And your purple shows your path !
But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath.”

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.



A CHILD ASLEEP.

How he sleepeth, having drunken
Weary childhood's mandragore !
From his pretty eyes have sunken
Pleasures to make room for more—
Sleeping near the witherèd nosegay which he pulled
the day before.

Nosegays ! leave them for the waking,
Throw them earthward where they grew.
Dim are such, beside the breaking
Amaranths he looks unto :
Folded eyes see brighter colours than the open ever do.

Heaven-flowers, rayed by shadows golden
From the palms they sprang beneath,
Now perhaps divinely holden,
Swing against him in a wreath :
We may think so from the quickening of his bloom and
of his breath.

Vision unto vision calleth,
While the young child dreameth on.
Fair, O dreamer, thee befalleth
With the glory thou hast won !
Darker wert thou in the garden, yestermorn by sum-
mer sun.

We should see the spirits raging
Round thee,—were the clouds away :
'Tis the child-heart draws them, singing
In the silent-seeming clay,
Singing !—stars that seem the mutest, go in music all
the way.

As the moths around a taper,
As the bees around a rose,
As the gnats around a vapour,
So the spirits group and close
Round about a holy childhood, as if drinking its repose.

Shapes of brightness overlean thee,
Flash their diadems of youth
On the ringlets which half screen thee,
While thou smilest . . . not in sooth
Thy smile, but the overfair one, dropt from some
aetherial mouth.

Haply it is angels' duty,
During slumber, shade by shade
To fine down this childish beauty
To the thing it must be made.
Ere the world shall bring it praises, or the tomb shall
see it fade.

Softly, softly ! make no noises !
Now he lieth dead and dumb.
Now he hears the angels' voices
Folding silence in the room.
Now he muses deep the meaning of the Heaven-words
as they come.

Speak not ! he is consecrated.
Breathe no breath across his eyes.
Lifted up and separated
On the hand of God he lies,
In a sweetness beyond touching,—held in cloistral
sanctities

Could ye bless him—father—mother,
Bless the dimple in his cheek?
Dare ye look at one another,
And the benediction speak?
Would ye not break out in weeping, and confess your-
selves too weak?

He is harmless—ye are sinful.
Ye are troubled—he, at ease.
From his slumber, virtue winful
Floweth outward with increase.
Dare not bless him! but be blessed by his peace—and
go in peace.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.



SLEEPING AND WATCHING.

SLEEP on, baby, on the floor,
Tired of all the playing!
Sleep with smile the sweeter for
That, you dropped away in!
On your curls' full roundness, stand
Golden lights serenely.
One cheek, pushed out by the hand,
Folds the dimples inly.
Little head and little foot
Heavy laid for pleasure,
Underneath the lids half-shut,
Slants the shining azure.—
Open-soul in noon-day sun,
So, you lie and slumber!
Nothing evil having done,
Nothing can encumber.

I, who cannot sleep as well,
Shall I sigh to view you ?
Or sigh further to foretell
All that may undo you ?
Nay, keep smiling, little child,
Ere the sorrow neareth.
I will smile too ! patience mild
Pleasure's token weareth.
Nay, keep sleeping before loss,
I shall sleep though losing !
As by cradle, so by cross,
Sure is the reposing.

And God knows Who sees us twain,
Child at childish leisure,
I am near as tired of pain
As you seem of pleasure.
Very soon too, by His grace
Gently wrapt around me,
Shall I show as calm a face,
Shall I sleep as soundly.
Differing in this, that you
Clasp your playthings, sleeping,
While my hand shall drop the few
Given to my keeping.
Differing in this, that I
Sleeping shall be colder,
And in waking presently,
Brighter to beholder.
Differing in this beside.
(Sleeper, have you heard me ?
Do you move, and open wide
Eyes of wonder toward me ?)—

That while you, I thus recall
From your sleep, I solely,
Me from mine an angel shall
With reveille holy.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.



THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN;
A CHILD'S STORY.

I.

HAMELIN town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city ;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its walls on the southern side ;
A pleasanter spot you never spied ;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, 'twas a pity.

II.

Rats !
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III.

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking :
“ ’Tis clear,” cried they, “ our Mayor’s a noddy ;
And as for our Corporation—shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can’t or won’t determine
What’s best to rid us of our vermin !
You hope, because you’re old and obese
To find in the furry civic robe ease ?
Rouse up, sirs ! Give your brains a racking
To find the remedy we’re lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we’ll send you packing ! ”
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV.

An hour they sat in council,
At length the Mayor broke silence :
“ For a guilder I’d my ermine gown sell,
I wish I were a mile hence !
It’s easy to bid one rack one’s brain—
I’m sure my poor head aches again,
I’ve scratched it so, and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap ! ”
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap !
“ Bless us,” cried the Mayor, “ what’s that ? ”
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little though wondrous fat ;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle green and glutinous).

"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

v.

"Come in!"—the Mayor cried, looking bigger :
And in did come the strangest figure !
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red,
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in ;
There was no guessing his kith and kin ;
And nobody could enough admire
The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one : " It's as my great grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked this way from his painted tomb-stone ! "

vi.

He advanced to the council-table :
And, " Please your honours," said he, " I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep or swim or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw !
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and toad and newt and viper ;
And people call me the Pied Piper."
(And here they noticed round his neck

A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of the self-same cheque ;
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe ;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying
As if impatient to be playing
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled).
“ Yet,” said he, “ poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,*
Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats ;
I eased in Asia the Nizam †
Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-bats :
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders ? ”
“ One ? Fifty thousand ! ” was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

vii.

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while ;
Then like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled ;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered ;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling ;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling ;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.

* The Chinese Emperor.

† The title of an Indian monarch.

Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,

Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,

Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives,
Followed the Piper for their lives.

From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,

Wherein all plunged and perished !
Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry

(As he, the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary :
Which was, " At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider-press's gripe :
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of buttercasks :
And it seemed as if a voice

(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, ' Oh rats, rejoice !

The world is grown to one vast drysaltery !
So munch on, munch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon ! '
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
All ready staved, like a great sun shone
Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, ' Come, bore me ! '
I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

VIII.

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
“Go,” cried the Mayor, “and get long poles,
Poke out the nests and block up the holes !

Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats ! ”—when suddenly up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, “First, if you please, my thousand guilders !”

IX.

A thousand guilders ! The Mayor looked blue ;
So did the Corporation too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hock :
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar’s biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gipsy coat of red and yellow !
“Beside,” quoth the Mayor, with a knowing wink,
“Our business was done at the river’s brink ;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what’s dead can’t come to life, I think.
So, friend, we’re not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke ;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty !
A thousand guilders ! Come. take fifty !”

X.

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait; beside,
I've promised to visit by dinner-time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the head-cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor!
With him I proved no bargain-driver,
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion."

XI.

"How!" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I brook
Being worse treated than a cook,
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst,
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

XII.

Once more he stepped into the street,
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping and little tongues chattering,

And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after.
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood,
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by—
And could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosoms beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street
To where the Weser rolled its waters
Right in the way of their sons and daughters !
However, he turned from south to west,
And to Koppelburg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed ;
Great was the joy in every breast.
“ He never can cross that mighty top !
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop ! ”
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed,
And the Piper advanced and the children followed ;
And when all were in to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast

Did I say, all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way ;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
“ It’s dull in our town since my playmates left !
I can’t forget that I’m bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new ;
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,
And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles’ wings :
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more ! ”

XIV.

Alas, alas, for Hamelin !

There came into many a burgher’s pate
A text which says that heaven’s gate
Opes to the rich at as easy rate
As the needle’s eye takes a camel in !
The Mayor sent east, west, north, and south,
To offer the Piper by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men’s lot to find him,

Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went,
 And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavour,
And Piper and dancers were gone for ever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
 Should think their records dated duly
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear,
“ And so long after what happened here
 On the twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six : ”
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They call it, the Pied Piper's Street,
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labour.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
 To shock with mirth a street so solemn :
But opposite the place of the cavern
 They wrote the story on a column,
And on the great church-window painted
The same to make the world acquainted
How their children were stolen away,
And there it stands to this very day.
And I must not omit to say
That in Transylvania there's a tribe
Of alien people that ascribe
The outlandish ways and dress
On which their neighbours lay such stress,
To their fathers and mothers having risen
Out of some subterraneous prison
Into which they were trepanned
Long time ago in a mighty band

Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
But how or why, they don't understand.

xv.

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
Of scores out with all men—especially pipers !
And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice,
If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise !

ROBERT BROWNING.



THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.

MORNING, evening, noon and night,
“ Praise God ! ” sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,
By which the daily meal was earned.

Hard he laboured, long and well ;
O'er his work the boy's curls fell.

But ever, at each period,
He stopped and sang, “ Praise God ! ”

Then back again his curls he threw,
And cheerfully turned to work anew.

Said Blaise, the listening monk, “ Well done ;
I doubt not thou art heard, my son :

As well as if thy voice to-day
Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome
Praises God from Peter's dome."

Said Theocrite, " Would God that I
Might praise Him, that great way, and die! "

Night passed, day shone,
And Theocrite was gone.

With God a day endures away,
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, " Nor day nor night
Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel, like a rainbow's birth,
Spread his wings and sank to earth ;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,
Lived there, and played the craftsman well ;

And morning, evening, noon and night,
Praised God in place of Theocrite.

And from a boy, to youth he grew :
The man put off the stripling's hue :

The man matured and fell away
Into the season of decay ;

And even o'er the trade he bent,
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will ; to him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun).

God said, " A praise is in mine ear ;
There is no doubt in it, no fear :

So sing old worlds, and so
New worlds that from my footstool go.

Clearer loves sound other ways :
I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day : he flew to Rome,
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

In the tiring-room close by
The great outer gallery,

With his holy vestments dight,
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite :

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,
Till on his life the sickness weighed ;

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer :

And rising from the sickness drear
He grew a priest, and now stood here.

To the East with praise he turned,
And on his sight the angel burned.

“ I bore thee from thy craftsman’s cell
And set thee here ; I did not well.

Vainly I left my angel’s sphere,
Vain was thy dream of many a year.

Thy voice’s praise seemed weak ; it dropped—
Creation’s chorus stopped !

Go back and praise again
The early way, while I remain.

With that weak voice of our disdain,
Take up creation’s pausing strain.

Back to the cell and poor employ :
Resume the craftsman and the boy ! ”

Theocrite grew old at home ;
A new Pope dwelt in Peter’s dome.

One vanished as the other died :
They sought God side by side.

ROBERT BROWNING.



BOB-O'-LINCOLN.

MERRILY swinging on briar and weed,
Near to the nest of his little dame,
Over the mountain or over the mead,
Robert of Lincoln is telling his name :

*Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink ;
Snug and safe is that nest of ours,
Hidden among the summer flowers,
Chee, chee, chee !*

Robert of Lincoln is gaily drest,
Wearing a bright black wedding coat ;
White are his shoulders and white his crest,
Hear him call in his merry note :
*Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink ;
Look what a nice new coat of mine,
Sure there never was bird so fine.
Chee, chee, chee !*

Robert of Lincoln's Quaker wife,
Pretty and quiet with plain brown wings,
Passing at home a patient life
Broods in the grass while her husband sings :
*Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink ;
Brood, kind creature ; you need not fear
Thieves and robbers, while I am hear.
Chee, chee, chee !*

Six white eggs on a bed of hay
Flecked with purple, a pretty sight !
There, as the mother sits all day,
Robert is singing with all his might :
*Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
Spink, spank, spink ;
Nice good wife that never goes out,
Keeping house while I frolic about,
Chee, chee, chee !*

Soon as the little ones chip the shell,
Six wide mouths are open for food ;
Robert of Lincoln bestirs him well,
Gathering seeds for the hungry brood :
 Bob-o'-link, bob-o'-link,
 Spink, spank, spink ;
This new life is likely to be
Hard for a gay young fellow like me,
 Chee, chee, chee !

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.



THE WALRUS AND THE CARPENTER.

THE sun was shining on the sea,
Shining with all his might :
He did his very best to make
The billows smooth and bright—
And this was odd, because it was
The middle of the night.

The moon was shining sulkily,
Because she thought the sun
Had got no business to be there
After the day was done—
“ It’s very rude of him,” she said,
“ To come and spoil the fun ! ”

The sea was wet as wet could be,
The sands were dry as dry ;
You could not see a cloud, because
No cloud was in the sky :
No birds were flying overhead—
There were no birds to fly.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Were walking close at hand ;
They wept like anything to see
Such quantities of sand :
“ If this were only cleared away,”
They said, “ It *would* be grand ! ”

“ If seven maids with seven mops
Swept it for half-a-year,
Do you suppose,” the Walrus said,
“ That they could get it clear ? ”
“ I doubt it,” said the Carpenter,
And shed a bitter tear.

“ O Oysters, come and walk with us ! ”
The Walrus did beseech.
“ A pleasant walk, a pleasant talk,
Along the briny beach :
We cannot do with more than four,
To give a hand to each.”

The eldest Oyster looked at him,
But never a word he said :
The eldest Oyster winked his eye,
And shook his heavy head—
Meaning to say he did not choose
To leave the oyster-bed.

But four young Oysters hurried up,
All eager for the treat :
Their coats were brushed, their faces washed,
Their shoes were clean and neat—
And this was odd, because, you know,
They hadn't any feet.

Four other Oysters followed them,
And yet another four ;
And thick and fast they came at last,
And more, and more, and more—
All hopping through the frothy waves,
And scrambling to the shore.

The Walrus and the Carpenter
Walked on a mile or so,
And then they rested on a rock
Conveniently low :
And all the little Oysters stood
And waited in a row.

“ The time has come,” the Walrus said,
“ To talk of many things :
Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—
Of cabbages—and kings—
And why the sea is boiling hot—
And whether pigs have wings.”

“ But, wait a bit,” the Oysters cried,
“ Before we have our chat ;
For some of us are out of breath,
And all of us are fat ! ”
“ No hurry ! ” said the Carpenter.
They thanked him much for that.

“ A loaf of bread,” the Walrus said,
“ Is what we chiefly need :
Pepper and vinegar besides
Are very good indeed—
Now if you're ready Oysters dear,
We can begin to feed.”

“ But not on us ! ” the Oysters cried,
Turning a little blue.

“ After such kindness, that would be
A dismal thing to do ! ”

“ The night is fine,” the Walrus said.

“ Do you admire the view ?

“ It was so kind of you to come !

And you are very nice ! ”

The Carpenter said nothing but

“ Cut me another slice :

I wish you were not quite so deaf—

I’ve had to ask you twice ! ”

“ It seems a shame,” the Walrus said,

“ To play them such a trick,

After we’ve brought them out so far,

And made them trot so quick ! ”

The Carpenter said nothing but

“ The butter’s spread too thick ! ”

“ I weep for you,” the Walrus said ;

“ I deeply sympathise.”

With sobs and tears he sorted out

Those of the largest size,

Holding his pocket-handkerchief

Before his streaming eyes.

“ O Oysters,” said the Carpenter,

“ You’ve had a splendid run !

Shall we be trotting home again ? ”

But answer came there none—

And this was scarcely odd, because

They’d eaten every one.

LEWIS CARROLL.

MY DARLINGS.

WHEN steps are hurrying homeward,
And night the world o'erspreads,
And I see at the open windows
The shining of little heads,
I think of you, my darlings,
In your low and lonesome beds.

And when the latch is lifted,
And I hear the voices glad,
I feel my arms more empty,
My heart more widely sad ;
For we measure dearth of blessings
By the blessings we have had.

But sometimes in sweet visions
My faith to sight expands,
And with my babes in His bosom
My Lord before me stands,
And I feel on my head bowed lowly
The touches of little hands.

Then pain is lost in patience,
And tears no longer flow :
They are only dead to the sorrow
And sin of life, I know ;
For if they were not immortal,
My love would make them so.

ALICE CARY.



THE BLIND BOY.

O SAY ! what is that thing called light,
Which I must ne'er enjoy ?
What are the blessings of the sight ?
O tell your poor blind boy !

You talk of wond'rous things you see,
And say the sun shines bright ;
I feel him warm, but how can he
Or make it day or night ?

My day or night myself I make,
Whene'er I sleep or play ;
And could I ever keep awake,
With me 'twere always day.

With heavy sighs I often hear
You mourn my hapless woe,
But sure with patience I can bear
A loss I ne'er can know.

Then let not what I cannot have
My cheer of mind destroy :
Whilst thus I sing, I am a king,
Although a poor blind boy.

COLLEY CIBBER.



CHILDHOOD.

OH what a wilderness were this sad world
If man were always man, and never child ;
If Nature gave no time, so sweetly wild,
When every thought is deftly crisped and curled,

Like fragrant hyacinth with dew impearled,
And every feeling in itself confiding,
Yet never single, but continuous, gliding
With wavy motion as, on wings unfurled,
A seraph clips Empyreal ! Such man was
Ere sin had made him know himself too well,
No child was born ere that primeval loss.
What might have been no living soul can tell ;
But Heaven is kind, and therefore all possess
Once in their life fair Eden's simpleness.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.



“OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

IN stature perfect, and in every gift
Which God would on His favourite work bestow,
Did our great Parent his pure form uplift,
And sprang from earth the lord of all below.

But Adam fell before a child was born,
And want and weakness with his fall began ;
So his first offspring was a thing forlorn,
In human shape, without the strength of man ;

So, Heaven has doomed that all of Adam's race,
Naked and helpless shall their course begin ;
E'en at their birth confess their need of grace,
And weeping, wail the penalty of sin.

Yet sure the babe is in the cradle blest,
Since God himself a baby deigned to be,
And slept upon a mortal mother's breast,
And steen'd in baby tears—His Dietv.

O sleep, sweet infant, for we all must sleep,
And wake like babes, that we may wake with Him,
Who watches still His own from harm to keep,
And o'er them spreads the wings of cherubim.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.



THE SABBATH DAY'S CHILD.

PURE, precious drop of dear mortality,
Untainted fount of life's meandering stream,
Whose innocence is like the dewy beam
Of morn, a visible reality,
Holy and quiet as a hermit's dream :
Unconscious witness to the promised birth
Of perfect good, that may not grow on earth,
Nor be computed by the worldly worth
And stated limits of morality ;
Fair type and pledge of full redemption given,
Through Him that saith, " Of such is the kingdom of
heaven ! "

Sweet infant, whom thy brooding parents love
For what thou art, and what they hope to see thee,
Unhallow'd sprites and earth-born phantoms flee thee ;
Thy soft simplicity, a hovering dove,
That still keeps watch from blight and bane to free
thee,
With its weak wings, in peaceful care outspread,
Fanning invisibly thy pillow'd head,
Strikes evil powers with reverential dread,
Beyond the sulphurous bolts of fabled Jove,
Or whatsoe'er of amulet or charm
Fond Ignorance devised to save poor souls from harm.

To see thee sleeping on thy mother's breast,
It were indeed a lovely sight to see—
Who would believe that restless sin can be
In the same world that holds such sinless rest?
Happy art thou, sweet babe, and happy she
Whose voice alone can still thy baby cries.
Now still itself; yet pensive smiles, and sighs,
And the mute meanings of a mother's eyes
Declare her thinking, deep felicity :
A bliss, my babe, how much unlike to thine,
Mingled with earthly fears, yet cheer'd with hope divine.

Thou breathing image of the life of Nature !
Say rather, image of a happy death—
For the vicissitudes of vital breath,
Of all infirmity the slave and creature,
That by the act of being perisheth,
Are far unlike that slumber's perfect peace
Which seems too absolute and pure to cease,
Or suffer diminution, or increase,
Or change of hue, proportion, shape, or feature ;
A calm, it seems, that is not, shall not be,
Save in the silent depths of calm eternity.

A star reflected in a dimpling rill
That moves so slow it hardly moves at all ;
The shadow of a white-robed waterfall
Seen in the lake beneath when all is still ;
A wandering cloud, that with its fleecy pall
Whitens the lustre of an autumn moon ;
A sudden breeze that cools the cheek of noon,
Not mark'd till miss'd—so soft it fades, and soon—
Whatever else the fond inventive skill
Of fancy may suggest cannot apply
Fit semblance of the sleeping life of infancy.

Calm art thou as the blessed Sabbath eve,
 The blessed Sabbath eve when thou wast born ;
 Yet sprightly as a summer Sabbath morn,
 When surely 'twere a thing unmeet to grieve :
 When ribbons gay the village maids adorn,
 And Sabbath music, on the swelling gales,
 Floats to the farthest nooks of winding vales,
 And summons all the beauty of the dales.
 Fit music this a stranger to receive,
 And, lovely child, it rang to welcome thee,
 Announcing thy approach with gladsome minstrelsy.

So be thy life—a gentle Sabbath, pure
 From worthless strivings of the work-day earth :
 May time make good the omen of thy birth,
 Nor worldly care thy growing thoughts immure,
 Nor hard-eyed thrift usurp the throne of mirth
 On thy smooth brow. And though fast coming years
 Must bring their fated dower of maiden fears,
 Of timid blushes, sighs, and fertile tears,
 Soft sorrow's sweetest offspring, and her cure ;
 May every day of thine be good and holy,
 And thy worst woe a pensive Sabbath melancholy.

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.



EPITAPH ON AN INFANT.

ITS balmy life the infant blest,
 Relaxing from its mother's breast ;
 How sweet it heaves the happy sigh
 Of innocent satiety !

And such my infant's latest sigh !
O tell, rude stone, the passer by,
That here the pretty babe doth lie
Death sang to sleep with lullaby.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.



ANSWER TO A CHILD'S QUESTION.

Do you know what the birds say? The Sparrow, the
Dove,
The Linnet and the Thrush say, " I love and I love ! "
In the winter they're silent—the wind is so strong ;
What it says, I don't know, but it sings a loud song.
But green leaves, and blossoms, and sunny warm
weather,
And singing, and loving—all come back together.
But the Lark is so brimful of gladness and love,
The green fields below him, the blue sky above,
That he sings, and he sings, and for ever sings he—
" I love my Love and my Love loves me ! "

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.



TO A VERY YOUNG LADY.

O GAY little girl with the merry brown eyes
Looking over my sheet as I scribble this twaddle,
Suppose I attempt just to make a surmise
In regard to the thoughts of your giddy young
noddle.

Theology—politics—science? Pooh, pooh!

Learn *them* for some twenty years after your bridal.
Young ladies of eight are a bore if they're blue :
“The Whole Duty of Girls” to be happy and idle.

You don't care a pin about Louis the Knave,
What schemes he is planning, what quarrel he'll fish
up :
You care just as little though John Bright may rave,
Or Palmerston make an unorthodox Bishop.

To you a ridiculous sight it would seem
If Tory and Radical came to a tussle :
You approve of ripe strawberries smothered in cream,
But not of Reform and its hero, John Russell.

What cares my young heroine, singing her tune,
And considering Wednesday a thoroughly jolly day,
For June has consented at last to be June,
With blue sky and dry grass and Papa making
holiday.

MORTIMER COLLINS.



THE NEW NURSERY.

IN the old familiar nursery
The children were busy at play,
So busy they scarcely noticed
When now and again, all day,
Mother and nurse entered
And carried something away.

A chair or a tiny table,
A pillow from off a bed,
The blankets and the coverlets
They took, but they nothing said :
The pretty picture from off the wall,
The table-cloth bright and red.

The cribs and then the cradle
Rolled through the open door, '
The bread-and-milk basins vanished,
The carpet from the floor ;
Then one by one the playthings went,
At last there was nothing more.

And the little ones ceased their playing,
And sat with solemn surprise,
Watching mamma and nursey,
For they could not at all surmise
Why they should carry the toys away
And hide them from their eyes.

The old familiar nursery
Seemed lonely now and bare ;
They missed the little snow-white beds,
And every table and chair,
And the red lips quivered with crying
While the grieved blue eyes did stare.

Then suddenly some one opened
A carefully-guarded door,
And they saw a large new nursery
They had never seen before,
All gay and bright and beautiful,
With sunshine on the floor.

There were the chairs and tables,
And the pictures from the wall,
And the little beds all neatly spread,
Each with its pillow small,
And every plaything they had missed,
There were they, one and all.

And puzzle and sorrow forgotten,
The joyous little crew
Left the bare, lonely room behind,
And ran the doorway through ;
And they did not miss the old at all,
So pleasant was the new.

And I thought as I saw them going,
Of lives grown dull and bare,
Stripped of the sweet accustomed things
Which made them dear and fair,
And only a puzzled patience left
For the hearts that waited there.

And how shall suddenly open
Some day, with a heavenly key,
A closely-guarded invisible door,
And the happy eyes shall see
Where, set in the glory of sunshine,
The vanished and dear things be.

And they will laugh for pleasure,
And scarcely believe it true,
And hasten to pass the portal ;
And, once they are safely through,
Forget the old sad and lonely life
In the happiness of the new.

SUSAN COOLIDGE.

BABY-LAND.

How many miles to Baby-land ?

Any one can tell ;

Up one flight

To your right ;

Please to ring the bell.

What can you see in Baby-land ?

Little folks in white,

Downy heads,

Cradle beds,

Faces pure and bright.

What do they do in Baby-land ?

Dream and wake and play,

Laugh and crow,

Shout and grow :

Jolly times have they.

What do they say in Baby-land ?

Why, the oddest things ;

Might as well

Try to tell

What a birdie sings.

Who is queen of Baby-land ?

Mother, kind and sweet ;

And her love,

Born above,

Guides the little feet !

GEORGE COOPER.



TO A CHILD OF FIVE YEARS OLD.

FAIREST flower, all flowers excelling,
Which in Milton's page we see ;
Flowers of Eve's embower'd dwelling
Are, my fair one, types of thee.

Mark, my Polly, how the roses
Emulate thy damask cheek ;
How the bud its sweets discloses—
Buds thy opening bloom bespeak.

Lillies are by plain direction,
Emblems of a double kind :
Emblems of thy fair complexion,
Emblems of thy fairer mind.

But, dear girl, both flowers and beauty
Blossom, fade, and die away ;
Then pursue good sense and duty,
Evergreens, which ne'er decay.

NATHANIEL COTTON.


PHILIP, MY KING.

Look at me with thy large brown eyes,
Philip, my king !
Round whom the enshadowing purple lies
Of babyhood's royal dignities ;
Lay on my neck thy tiny hand,
With love's invisible sceptre laden ;
I am thine Esther to command
Till thou shalt find a queen-handmaiden,
Philip, my king !

O, the day when thou goest a-wooing,
Philip, my king !
When those beautiful lips are suing,
And some gentle heart's bans undoing
Thou dost enter, love-crowned, and there
Sittest love glorified. Rule kindly,
Tenderly, over thy kingdom fair.
For we that love, ah ! we love so blindly,
Philip, my king !

Up from thy sweet mouth—unto thy brow,
Philip, my king !
The spirit that there lies sleeping now
May rise like a giant, and make men bow
As to one heaven-chosen amongst his peers ;
My Saul, than thy brethren taller and fairer,
Let me behold thee in future years ;
Yet thy head needeth a circlet rarer,
Philip, my king !

A wreath not of gold, but palm. One day,
Philip, my king !
Thou, too, must tread, as we trod, a way
Thorny and cruel and cold and gray ;
Rebels within thee and foes without,
Will snatch at thy crown. But march on, glorious
Martyr, yet monarch, till angels shout,
As thou sit'st at the feet of God victorious,
“ Philip, the king ! ”

DINAH MARIA CRAIK.



A DREAM-CHILD.

LITTLE one, I lie i' the dark,
With thy sweet lips pressed to mine ;
My hot restless pulses meeting
Thy still heart's unnoticed beating,
In a calm divine.

On my breast thy dear hair floats ;
Well its memoried hue I know !
And thine eyes, if thou wert raising,
They would answer to my gazing,
Looks of long ago.

Fairy hand, that on my cheek
Falls, with touch as dove's wing soft ;
I can feel its curves, resembling
One that like a young bird trembling
Lay in mine so oft.

Thou wilt spring up at my feet
Flower-like—beautiful and wild ;
Gossips, too, on me bestowing
Flattery sweet, will say, thou'rt growing
Like thy father, child.

No, I would not have my face
Imaged, happy one ! in thine ;
I—who crushed out all my being
In one cup, and poured, clear-seeing,
My heart's blood like wine.

I have given thee a name—
What name, none shall ever know ;
When I say it, there comes thronging,
A whole life-time's aim and longing,
And a life-time's woe.

Ah—that name ! I wake—I wake,
And the light breaks, bleak and bare—
Sweet one, never born, yet dying
To my love all unreplying,
Dream-child, melt to air !

Eyes no wife shall ever kiss,
Arms no child shall ever fill,
Lift I up to heaven, beseeching
Him who sent this bitter teaching—
I will learn it still.

Not as we see, seeth God ;
Not as we love, loveth He ;
When the tear-spent eyes are closing,
And the weary limbs reposing—
Lo—eternity !

DINAH MARIA CRAIK.



A CHILD'S SMILE.

A CHILD's smile—nothing more ;
Quiet and soft and grave, and seldom seen ;
Like summer lightning o'er,
Leaving the little face again serene.

I think, boy, well-beloved,
Thine angel, who did grieve to see how far
Thy childhood is removed
From sports, that dear to other children are,

On this pale cheek has thrown
The brightness of his countenance, and made
A beauty like his own—
That, while we see it, we are half afraid,

And marvel, will it stay ?
Or, long ere manhood, will that angel fair,
Departing some sad day,
Steal the child-smile, and leave the shadow care ?

Nay, fear not. As is given
Unto this child the father watching o'er,
His angel up in heaven,
Beholds our Father's face for evermore.

And He will help him bear
His burthen, as his Father helps him now ;
So may he come to wear
That happy child-smile on an old man's brow.

DINAH MARIA CRAIK.



A LESSON FOR MAMMA.

DEAR mother, if you just could be
A tiny little girl like me,
And I your mother, you would see
How nice I'd be to you.

I'd always let you have your way ;
I'd never frown at you and say,
" You are behaving ill to-day ;
Such conduct will not do."

I'd always give you jelly-cake
For breakfast, and I'd never shake
My head and say, " You must not take
So very large a slice."
I'd never say, " My dear, I trust
You will not make me say you *must*
Eat up your oatmeal ;" or, " The crust
You'll find is very nice."

I'd buy you candy every day ;
I'd go down town with you, and say,
" What would my darling like ? You may
Have anything you see."
I'd never say, " My pet, you know
'Tis bad for health and teeth, and so
I cannot let you have it. No ;
It would be wrong in me."

And every day I'd let you wear
Your nicest dress, and never care
If it should get a great big tear ;
I'd only say to you,
" My precious treasure, never mind,
For little clothes *will* tear, I find."
Now, mother, wouldn't that be kind ?
That's just what *I* should do.

I'd never say, " Well, just a *few* ! "
I'd let you stop your lessons too ;
I'd say, " They are too hard for you,
Poor child, to understand."

I'd put the books and slates away ;
You shouldn't do a thing but play,
And have a party every day ;
Ah—h—h ! wouldn't that be grand !

But, mother dear, you cannot grow
Into a little girl, you know,
And I can't be your mother ; so
The only thing to do,
Is just for you to try and see
How very, very nice 'twould be
For *you* to do all this for *me* ;
Now, mother, *couldn't* you ?

SYDNEY DAYRE.



THE CHILDREN.*

WHEN the lessons and tasks are all ended,
And the school for the day is dismissed,
And the little ones gather around me
To bid me "Good-night," and be kissed ;

* It is a common story that this beautiful poem was found in the desk of Charles Dickens after his death ; and, consequently, it has been frequently printed as a genuine production of the eminent novelist. A number of years ago, it was claimed by Charles M. Dickinson, presumably the real author, who was then living at Louisville, New York, and to get at the matter a friend wrote to Charles Dickens, the younger, asking for a correct solution of the question. He replied as follows :—

"The verses were written by a Mr. Dickinson, a newspaper editor in the town of Binghamton, New York. No copy of them was found in my father's desk. How the legend first got into circulation I do not know, but it has cost me a great deal of correspondence during the last five-and-twenty years.—Faithfully yours, CHARLES DICKENS."

Oh, the little white arms that encircle
My neck in a tender embrace ;
Oh, the smiles that are halos of heaven,
Shedding sunshine and love on my face.

And when they are gone I sit dreaming
Of my childhood, too lovely to last ;
Of love, that my heart will remember
When it wakes to the pulse of the past ;
Ere the world and its wickedness made me
A partner of sorrow and sin,
When the glory of God was about me,
And the glory of gladness within.

Oh, my head grows weak as a woman's,
And the fountain of feeling will flow,
When I think of the paths, steep and stony,
Where the feet of the dear ones must go ;
Of the mountains of sin hanging o'er them,
Of the tempests of fate blowing wild ;
Oh, there's nothing on earth half so holy
As the innocent heart of a child !

They are idols of hearts and of households ;
They are angels of God in disguise ;
His sunlight still keeps in their tresses,
His glory still beams in their eyes.
Oh, those truants from earth and from heaven,
They have made me more manly and mild,
And I know how Jesus could liken
The Kingdom of God to a child.

Seek not a life for the dear ones
All radiant, as others have done ;
But that life may have just as much shadow
To temper the glare of the sun.

I would pray God to guard them from evil,
But my prayer would bound back to myself,
Ah ! a seraph may pray for a sinner,
But a sinner must pray for himself.

The twig is so easily bended,
I have banished the rule of the rod,
I have taught them the goodness of knowledge ;
They have taught me the goodness of God.
My heart is a dungeon of darkness,
Where I shut them from breaking a rule,
My frown is sufficient correction,
My love is the law of the school.

I shall leave the old home in the autumn,
To traverse its threshold no more ;
Ah ! how I shall sigh for the dear ones
That meet me each morn at the door.
I shall miss the " Good nights," and the kisses,
And the gush of their innocent glee,
The groups on the green, and the flowers
That are brought every morning to me.

I shall miss them at morn and at even,
Their songs in the school and the street ;
I shall miss the low hum of their voices,
And the tramp of their delicate feet.
When the lessons and tasks are all ended,
And Death says the school is dismissed,
May the little ones gather around me,
And bid me " Good night," and be kissed !

CHARLES M. DICKINSON.



DAISY'S VALENTINES.

ALL night, through Daisy's sleep, it seems,
Have ceaseless "rat-tats" thundered ;
All night through Daisy's rosy dreams
Have devious Postmen blundered,
Delivering letters round her bed,—
Suggestive missives, sealed with red,
And franked, of course, with due Queen's head—
While Daisy lay and wondered.

But now, when chirping birds begin,
And Day puts off the Quaker,—
When Cook renews her morning din,
And rates the cheerful baker,—
She dreams her dream no dream at all,
For, just as pigeons come to call,
Winged letters flutter down, and fall
Around her head, and wake her.

Yes, there they are ! With quirk and twist,
And fraudulent arts directed ;
(Save Grandpapa's dear stiff old " fist,"
Through all disguise detected ;)
But which is his,—her young Lothair's—
Who wooed her on the schoolroom stairs
With three sweet cakes, and two ripe pears,
In one neat pile collected ?

'Tis there, be sure. Though, truth to speak
(If truth may be permitted),
I doubt that young " gift-bearing Greek "
Is scarce for fealty fitted :

For has he not (I grieve to say),
To two loves more, on this same day,
In just the same emblazoned way,
His transient vows transmitted ?

He may be true. Yet, Daisy dear,
That even youth grows colder
You'll find is no new thing, I fear ;
And when you're somewhat older
You'll read of one Dardanian boy
Who " wooed with gifts " a maiden coy—
Then took the morning train to Troy,
In spite of all he'd told her.

But wait. Your time will come. And then,
Obliging Fates, please send her
The nicest thing you have in men,
Sound-hearted, strong, and tender ;—
The kind of man, dear Fates, you know,
That feels how shyly Daisies grow,
And what soft things they are, and so
Will spare to spoil or mend her.

AUSTIN DOBSON.



THE CRADLE.

How steadfastly she'd worked at it !
How lovingly had drest,
With all her would-be-mother's wit,
That little rosy nest !

How lovingly she'd hang on it !—
It sometimes seemed, she said,
There lay beneath its coverlet
A little sleeping head.

He came at last, the tiny guest,
Ere bleak December fled ;
That rosy nest he never prest—
Her coffin was its bed.

AUSTIN DOBSON.



NOBODY KNOWS BUT MOTHER.

Nobody knows of the work it makes
To keep the home together ;
Nobody knows of the steps it takes,
Nobody knows—but mother.

Nobody listens to childish woes
Which kisses only smother ;
Nobody's pained by naughty blows,
Nobody—only mother.

Nobody knows of the sleepless care
Bestowed on baby brother ;
Nobody knows of the tender pray'r,
Nobody—only mother.

Nobody knows of the lessons taught
Of loving one another ;
Nobody knows of the patience sought,
Nobody—only mother.

Nobody knows of the anxious fears
Lest darlings may not weather
The storm of life in after years,
Nobody knows—but mother.

Nobody kneels at the throne above
To thank the Heavenly Father
For that sweetest gift—a mother's love ;
Nobody can—but mother.

H. C. DODGE.



MOTHER'S DARLING.

Two little girls are better than one ;
Two little boys can double the fun ;
Two little birds can build a fine nest ;
Two little arms can love mother best.

Two little ponies must go to a span ;
Two little pockets has my little man ;
Two little eyes to open and close ;
Two little ears and one little nose.

Two little elbows, dimpled and sweet ;
Two little shoes on two little feet ;
Two little lips and one little chin ;
Two little cheeks with roses set in.

Two little shoulders, chubby and strong ;
Two little legs running all the day long ;
Two little prayers does my darling say ;
Twice does he kneel by my side each day.

Two little folded hands, soft and brown ;
Two little eyelids cast meekly down ;
And two little angels guard him in bed ;
One at the foot, and one at the head.

MARY MAPES DODGE.



CHILDREN'S JOYS.

THE children's world is full of sweet surprises ;
Our common things are precious in their sight :
For them the stars shine, and the morning rises
To show new treasures of untold delight.

A dance of blue-bells in the shady places ;
A crimson flush of sunset in the west ;
The cobwebs, delicate as fairy laces ;
The sudden finding of a wood-bird's nest.

Their hearts and lips are full of simple praises,
To Him Who made the earth divinely sweet ;
They dwell among the butter-cups and daisies,
And find His blessings strewn about their feet.

But we, worn out by days of toil and sorrow,
And sick of pleasures that are false and vain,
Would freely give our golden hoards to borrow
One little hour of childhood's bliss again.

Yet He Who sees their joy, beholds our sadness ;
And in the wisdom of a Father's love
He keeps the secret of the heavenly gladness :
Our sweet surprises wait for us above.

SARAH DOUDNEY.

THE CHILDREN'S GARDENS.

THE old house in the sunlight stands,
Decayed, and half asleep,
And in the silent meadow lands
The grass is long and deep ;
Showers from the roses over-blown,
Drop softly in the shade ;
Ah me ! how wild the weeds have grown
Where once the children played.

Their tangled gardens still are sweet
With pinks and pansies gay ;
But never more the dancing feet
Shall tread this quiet way.
And they far off, perchance, have said,
When summer blossoms glow,
" I wonder if the flowers are dead
We planted, years ago ! "

Still thinking of those distant bowers,
Dear children, older grown ?
Things that are sweeter than the flowers
Your little hands have sown.
Kind deeds that gladdened weary men,
And women worn with care ;
Those precious seeds you scattered then,
Took root and flourished there.

For nothing dies, and Love survives
Through years of change and pain ;
In faithful souls, in toiling lives,
Your childhood lives again ;

And hearts still yearning for the past
The answer yet shall know,
"Children, the flowers always last
You planted long ago."

SARAH DOUDNEY.



BROTHER AND SISTER.

I CANNOT choose but think upon the time
When our two lives grew like two buds that kiss
At lightest thrill from the bee's swinging chime,
Because the one so near the other is.
He was the elder, and a little man
Of forty inches, bound to show no dread,
And I the girl that, puppy-like, now ran,
Now lagged behind my brother's larger tread.
I held him wise, and when he talked to me
Of snakes and birds, and which God loved the best,
I thought his knowledge marked the boundary
Where men grow blind, though angels knew the rest.
If he said "Hush!" I tried to hold my breath;
Whenever he said "Come!" I stepped in faith.

School parted us; we never found again
That childish world where our two spirits mingled
Like scents from varying roses that remain
One sweetness, nor can evermore be singled;
Yet the twin habit of that early time
Lingered for long about the heart and tongue;
We had been natives of one happy clime,
And its dear accent to our utterance clung:

Till the dire years whose awful name is Change
Had grasped our souls still yearning in divorce.
And, pitiless, shaped them into two forms that range,
Two elements which sever their life's course.
But were another childhood world my share,
I would be born a little sister there.

GEORGE ELIOT.



LITTLE JIM.

THE cottage was a thatch'd one,
The outside old and mean,
Yet everything within that cot
Was wondrous neat and clean.

The night was dark and stormy,
The wind was howling wild ;
A patient mother knelt beside
The death-bed of her child.

A little worn-out creature—
His once bright eyes grown dim ;
It was a collier's only child—
They call'd him Little Jim.

And oh ! to see the briny tears
Fast hurrying down her cheek,
As she offer'd up a prayer in thought—
She was afraid to speak,

Lest she might waken one she lov'd
Far better than her life,
For there was all a mother's love
In that poor collier's wife.

With hands uplifted, see, she kneels
Beside the sufferer's bed ;
And prays that He will spare her boy,
And take herself instead !

She gets her answer from the child ;
Soft fell these words from him—
“ Mother, the angels do so smile,
And beckon little Jim !

“ I have no pain, dear mother, now,
But oh ! I am so dry ;
Just moisten poor Jim's lips again,
And, mother, don't you cry.”

With gentle trembling haste she held
The tea-cup to his lips ;
He smiled, to thank her, as he took
Three little tiny sips.

“ Tell father when he comes from work
I said good-night to him ;
And, mother, now I'll go to sleep : ”—
Alas ! poor little Jim.

She saw that he was dying—
The child she lov'd so dear,
Had utter'd the last words that she
Might ever hope to hear.

The cottage door was open'd,
The collier's step was heard ;
The mother and the father met,
Yet neither spake a word !

He knew that all was over—
He knew his child was dead ;
He took the candle in his hand,
And walk'd towards the bed.

His quiv'ring lips gave token
Of grief he'd fain conceal ;
And see ! his wife has join'd him,
The stricken couple kneel !

With hearts bowed down with sadness,
They humbly ask of Him,
In heaven, once more, to meet again,
Their own poor LITTLE JIM.

EDWARD FARMER.



WYNKEN, BLYNKEN, AND NOD.

WYNKEN, Blynken, and Nod one night
Sailed off in a wooden shoe—
Sailed on a river of misty light
Into a sea of dew ;
“ Where are you going, and what do you wish ? ”
The old moon asked the three.
“ We've come to fish for the herring-fish
That live in this beautiful sea ;
Nets of silver and gold have we, ”
Said Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

The old moon laughed and sang a song,
As they rocked in the wooden shoe—
And the wind that sped them all night long
Ruffled the waves of dew ;

The little stars were the herring-fish
That lived in that beautiful sea ;
“Now cast your nets wherever you wish—
But never afeared are we,”
So cried the stars to the fishermen three—
 Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

All night long their nets they threw
For the fish in the twinkling foam—
Then down from the sky came the wooden shoe
Bringing the fishermen home.
’Twas all so pretty a sail, it seemed
As if it could not be,
And some folks thought ’twas a dream they’d dreamed
Of sailing that beautiful sea :
But I shall name you the fishermen three—
 Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

Wynken and Blynken are two little eyes,
And Nod is a little head,
And the wooden shoe that sailed the skies
Is a wee one’s trundle bed ;
So shut your eyes while mother sings
Of wonderful sights that be,
And you shall see the beautiful things
As you rock on the misty sea,
Where the old shoe rocked the fishermen three—
 Wynken, Blynken, and Nod.

EUGENE FIELD.



LITTLE BOY BLUE.

THE little toy dog is covered with dust,
But steady and staunch he stands :
And the little toy soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new
And the soldier was passing fair,
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

"Now, don't you go till I come," he said,
"And don't you make any noise !"
So, toddling off to his trundle bed,
He dreamt of the pretty toys.
And as he was dreaming an angel song
Awakened our Little Boy Blue—
Oh, the years are many, the years are long,
But the little toy friends are true.

Aye faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,
Each in the same old place,
Awaiting the touch of a little hand,
The smile of a little face ;
And they wonder, as waiting these long years through,
In the dust of that little chair,
What has become of our Little Boy Blue
Since he kissed them and put them there.

EUGENE FIELD.



SO, SO, ROCK-A-BY SO !

So, so, rock-a-by so !

Off to the garden where dreamikins grow ;

And here is a kiss on your winkyblink eyes,

And here is a kiss on your dimpledown cheek,

And here is a kiss for the treasure that lies

In a beautiful garden way up in the skies

Which you seek.

Now mind these three kisses wherever you go—

So, so, rock-a-by so !

There's one little fumfay who lives there, I know,

For he dances all night where the dreamikins grow ;

I send him this kiss on your droopydrop eyes.

I send him this kiss on your rosyred cheek.

And here is a kiss for the dream that shall rise

When the fumfay shall dance in those far-away skies

Which you seek.

Be sure that you pay those three kisses you owe—

So, so, rock-a-by so !

And, by-low, as you rock-a-by go,

Don't forget mother who loveth you so !

And here is her kiss on your weepy-deep eyes,

And here is her kiss on your peachypink cheek,

And here is her kiss for the dreamland that lies

Like a babe on the breast of those far-away skies

Which you seek—

The blinkywink garden where dreamikins grow—

So, so, rock-a-by so !

EUGENE FIELD.

SEEIN' THINGS.

I ain't afeard uv snakes, or toads, or bugs, or worms,
or mice,
An' things 'at girls are skeered uv I think are awful
nice !
I'm pretty brave, I guess ! an' yet I hate to go to bed,
For when I'm tucked up warm an' snug, an' when my
prayers are said,
Mother tells me " Happy dreams ! " and takes away
the light,
An' leaves me lyin' all alone an' seein' things at night !

Sometimes they're in the corner, sometimes they're by
the door,
Sometimes they're all a-standin' in the middle uv the
floor ;
Sometimes they are a-sittin' down, sometimes they're
walkin' round
So softly an' so creepy-like they never made a sound !
Sometimes they are as black as ink, an' other times
they're white—
But the color ain't no difference when you see things at
night !

Once, when I licked a feller 'at had just moved on our
street,
An' father sent me up to bed without a bite to eat,
I woke up in the dark an' saw things standin' in a row,
A-lookin' at me cross-eyed an' p'intin' at me—so !
Oh, my ! I wuz so skeered that time I never slep' a
mite—
It's almost alluz when I'm bad I see things at night !

Lucky thing I ain't a girl, or I'd be skeered to death !
Bein' I'm a boy, I duck my head an' hold my breath ;
An' I am, oh ! *so* sorry I'm a naughty boy, an' then
I promise to be better an' I say my prayers again !
Gran'ma tells me that's the only way to make it right
When a feller has been wicked an' sees things at night !

An' so, when other naughty boys would coax me into
 sin,
I try to skwush the Tempter's voice 'at urges me
 within ;
An' when they's pie for supper, or cakes 'at's big an'
 nice,
I want to—but I do not pass my plate f'r them things
 twice !
No, ruther let Starvation wipe me slowly out o' sight
Than I should keep a-livin' on an' seein' things at night !

EUGENE FIELD.



TWO LITTLE SKEEZUCKS.

THERE were two little skeezucks who lived in the isle
Of Boo in a southern sea :
They clambered and rollicked in heathenish style
In the boughs of their cocoanut tree.
They didn't fret much about clothing and such
And they recked not a whit of the ills
 That sometimes accrue
 From having to do
With tailor and laundry bills.

The two little skeezucks once heard of a fair
Far off from their native isle,
And they asked of King Fan if they mightn't go there
To take in the sights for awhile.
Now old King Fan
Was a good-natured man
(As good-natured monarchs go),
And howbeit he swore that all fairs were a bore,
He hadn't the heart to say "no."

So the two little skeezucks sailed off to the fair
In a great big gum canoe,
And I fancy they had a good time there,
For they tarried a year or two.
And old King Fan at last began
To reckon they'd come to grief.
When glory ! one day
They sailed into the bay
To the tune of "Hail to the Chief !"

The two little skeezucks fell down on the sand,
Embracing his majesty's toes,
Till his majesty graciously bade them stand
And salute him nose to nose.
And then quoth he :
"Divulge to me
What happenings have hapt to you ;
And how did they dare to indulge in a fair
So far from the island of Boo ?"

The two little skeezucks assured their king
That what he surmised was true ;
That the fair would have been a different thing
Had it only been held in Boo !

“ The folk over there in no wise compare
With the folk of the southern seas ;
 Why, they comb out their heads
 And they sleep in beds
Instead of in caverns and trees ! ”

The two little skeezucks went on to say
 That children (so far as they knew)
Had a much harder time in that land far away
 Than here in the island of Boo !
 They have to wear clo'es,
 Which (as every one knows)
Are irksome to primitive laddies,
While with forks and with spoons, they're denied the
 sweet boons
 That accrue from the use of one's paddies !

“ And now that you're speaking of things to eat,”
Interrupted the monarch of Boo,
“ We beg to inquire if you happened to meet
 With a nice missionary or two ? ”
“ No, that we did not ; in that curious spot
 Where were gathered the fruits of the earth,
 Of that special kind
 Which Your Nibs has in mind
There appeared a deplorable dearth.”

Then loud laughed that monarch in heathenish mirth,
And loud laughed his courtiers, too.
And they cried : “ There is elsewhere no land upon earth
 So good as our island of Boo ! ”
 And the skeezucks, tho' glad
 Of the journey they'd had,
Climbed up in their cocoanut trees,
Where they still may be seen with no shirts to keep clean,
Or trousers that bag at the knees.

EUGENE FIELD.

AT THE DOOR.

I THOUGHT myself indeed secure,
So fast the door, so firm the lock ;
But, lo ! he toddling comes to lure
My parent ear with timorous knock.

My heart were stone could it withstand
The sweetness of my baby's plea--
That timorous, baby knocking, and
" Please let me in—it's only me."

I threw aside the unfinished book,
Regardless of its tempting charms,
And, opening wide the door, I took
My laughing darling in my arms.

Who knows but in eternity,
I like a truant child, shall wait
The glories of a life to be,
Beyond the Heavenly Father's gate?

And will that Heavenly Father heed
The truant's supplicating cry,
And at the outer door I plead,
" 'Tis I, O Father ! only I ?"

EUGENE FIELD.



SOME TIME.

LAST night, my darling, as you slept,
I thought I heard you sigh,
And to your little crib I crept
And watched a space thereby ;
Then, bending down, I kissed your brow—
For, oh ! I love you so—
You are too young to know it now,
But some time you shall know.

Some time, when in a darkened place
Where others come to weep,
Your eyes shall see a weary face
Calm in eternal sleep.
The speechless lips, the wrinkled brow,
The patient smile may show—
You are too young to know it now,
But some time you shall know.

Look backward, then, into the years,
And see me here to-night—
See, O my darling ! how my tears
Are falling as I write ;
And feel once more upon your brow
The kiss of long ago—
You are too young to know it now,
But some time you shall know.

EUGENE FIELD.



THE ROCK-A-BY LADY.

THE Rock-a-by Lady from Hushaby Street
Comes stealing ; comes creeping ;
The poppies they hang from her head to her feet,
And each hath a dream that is tiny and fleet—
She bringeth her poppies to you, my sweet,
When she findeth you sleeping !

There is one little dream of a beautiful drum—
“ Rub-a-dub ! ” it goeth ;
There is one little dream of a big sugar-plum,
And lo ! thick and fast the other dreams come
Of popguns that bang, and tin tops that hum,
And a trumpet that bloweth !

And Dollies peep out of those wee little dreams
With laughter and singing ;
And boats go a-floating on silvery streams,
And the stars peep-a-boo with their own misty gleams,
And up, up, and up where the Mother Moon beams
The fairies go winging !

Would you dream all these dreams that are tiny and
fleet ?

They'll come to you sleeping ;
So shut the two eyes that are weary, my sweet,
For the Rock-a-by Lady from Hushaby Street,
With poppies that hang from her head to her feet,
Comes stealing ; comes creeping.

EUGENE FIELD.



WITH TRUMPET AND DRUM.

WITH big tin trumpet and little red drum,
Marching like soldiers, the children come !
It's this way and that way they circle and file—

My, but that music of theirs is fine !
This way and that way, and after a while
They march straight into this heart of mine.
A sturdy old heart, but it has to succumb
To the blare of that trumpet and beat of that drum !

Come on, little people, from cot and from hall—
This heart it hath welcome and room for you all !
I will sing you its songs and warm you with love
As your dear little arms with my arms entwine ;
It will rock you away to the dreamland above—
Oh, a jolly old heart is this heart of mine.
And jollier still it is bound to become
When you blow that big trumpet and beat that big
drum !

So, come, though I see not his dear little face
And hear not his voice in this jubilant place,
I know he were happy to bid me enshrine
His memory deep in my heart with your play.
Ah, me, but a love that is sweeter than mine
Holdeth my boy in its keeping to-day !
And my heart it is lonely—so little folk, come,
March in and make merry with trumpet and drum !

EUGENE FIELD.



THE LITTLE PEACH.

A LITTLE peach in the orchard grew,
A little peach of emerald hue,
Warmed by the sun, and wet by the dew,
It grew.

One day, passing the orchard through,
That little peach dawned on the view
Of Johnnie Jones and his sister Sue—
Them two.

Up at the peach a club they threw :
Down, from the limb on which it grew,
Fell the little peach of emerald hue—
Mon Dieu !

John took a bite, and Sue took a chew,
And then the trouble began to brew—
Trouble the Doctor couldn't subdue—
Too true !

Under the turf where the daisies grew
They planted John and his sister Sue ;
And their little souls to the angels flew—
Boo—hoo !

But what of the peach of emerald hue,
Warmed by the sun, and wet by the dew ?
Ah, well ! its mission on earth is through—
Adieu !

EUGENE FIELD.

TELLIN' WHAT THE BABY DID.

In the cosy twilight hid,
Tellin' what the baby did,
'Twixt the darkness and the light ;
Tells me in her cutest way
All the history of the day ;
Gives me all—leaves nothing hid—
Tellin' what the baby did.

Beats the whole decline an' fall
Of the Roman Empire. Gol !
William Shakespeare never hed
'Cuter thoughts than baby sed ;
An' he hez, to sing his thoughts,
Sweeter words than Isaac Watts.
'Tildy, she leaves nothin' hid,
Tellin' what the baby did.

Pooty hard schoolmarm is Fate,
To her scholars small an' great ;
I hev felt upon my han'
Tingles of her sharp rattan ;
But she pities our distress,
An' she gives a glad recess,
When Matilda sits, half hid,
Tellin' what the baby did.

Trudge off with my dinner pail
Every mornin' without fail ;
Work, with hardly time for breath ;
Come home half tired to death ;

But I feel a perfect rest
Settle down upon my rest ;
Settin' by the twilight hid,
Hearin' what the baby did.

Sometimes I cannot resist,
And I shake my double fist
In the face of Fate, an' swear,
" You don't treat a fellow fair ! "
Then when I go home at night,
My whole system full of fight,
'Tildy, she sits there, half hid,
Tellin' what the baby did.

Then I jest make up with Fate,
An' my happiness is great.
But if Fate should lay its han'
On that baby, understaun',
Through the worl' I'd sulk apart
With red murder in my heart ;
If she sat no more, half hid,
Tellin' what the baby did.

S. W. Foss.



CRADLE SONG.

BEEs are resting sugary thighs,
Stars awake in the evening skies,
Timothy, Timothy, close your eyes,
King of the cradle, sleep.

Sleep, my honey ; O sleep; my star,
Dream where the rainbow ribbons are,
Ride with the Queen in the Fairies' car,
King of the cradle, sleep.

Father is tossing upon the sea,
Timothy rocks at home with me ;
Weary of trumpet, cannon, and knee,
King of the cradle, sleep.

God, Whose babes are many and far,
Save him from craft, and save from war ;
Give to my rose from a golden star,
Honey and innocent sleep.

NORMAN GALE.



PLAYING AT PARADISE.

SHE called to me with dancing eyes,
“ We're both turned out of Paradise ;
The Tree of Knowledge was the pear,
That's over in the corner there.

“ And, mother dearest, Cousin Jake
Was simply splendid as the snake ;
He curved about the trunk ; to hiss
He shot his tongue out, just like this.

“ He kicked the branches with his feet,
To knock us down some pears to eat ;
And when we tasted them there came
An angel with a sword of flame.

“ Bob was the angel ; and he said
We must dig thistles for our bread.
And though we digged with toil and pain,
He'd make the thistles grow again.

“ But can he, mother ? And he says
The orchard's shut to us for days.
Do come, and make him let us in,
Because we're sorry for our sin.”

I went, and whirling by the gate
A wooden sword about his pate,
I found our Bob in angel-wise
Guarding his orchard-paradise.

“ Beware the flaming sword ! ” he cried,
“ It turns all ways ! don't come inside ! ”
“ Now, Bob, run in,” I laughing said,
“ It's time all angels were in bed.”

NORMAN GALE.



TO MY DAUGHTER.

THOU hast the colours of the spring,
The gold of kingcups triumphing,
The blue of wood-bells wild ;
But winter-thoughts thy spirit fill,
And thou art wandering from us still,
Too young to be our child.

Yet have thy fleeting smiles confessed,
Thou dear and much-desired guest,
That home is near at last ;

Long lost in high mysterious lands,
Close by our door thy spirit stands,
Its journey well-nigh past.

Oh sweet bewildered soul, I watch
The fountains of thine eyes, to catch
New fancies bubbling there,
To feel our common light, and lose
The flush of strange ethereal hues
Too dim for us to share ;

Fade, cold immortal lights, and make
This creature human for my sake,
Since I am nought but clay ;
An angel is too fine a thing
To sit beside my chair and sing,
And cheer my passing day,

I smile, who could not smile, unless
The air of rapt unconsciousness
Passed, with the fading hours ;
I joy in every childish sign
That proves the stranger less divine
And much more meekly ours.

I smile, as one by night who sees,
Through mist of newly-budded trees,
The clear Orion set,
And knows that soon the dawn will fly,
In fire across the riven sky,
And gild the woodlands wet.

EDMUND GOSSE.



BABY IN CHURCH.

AUNT NELLIE had fashioned a dainty thing,
Of hamburg and ribbon and lace,
And Mamma had said, as she settled it 'round
Our beautiful Baby's face,
Where the dimples play and the laughter lies
Like sunbeams hid in her violet eyes :
" If the day is pleasant and Baby is good,
She may go to church and wear her new hood."

Then Ben, aged six, began to tell,
In elder-brotherly way,
How very, very good she must be
If she went to church next day.
He told of the church, the choir and the crowd,
And the man up in front who talked so loud ;
But she must not talk nor laugh nor sing,
But just sit as quiet as anything.

And so, on a beautiful Sabbath in May,
When the fruit-buds burst into flowers
(There wasn't a blossom on bush or tree
So fair as this blossom of ours),
All in her white dress, dainty and new,
Our Baby sat in the family pew,
The grand, sweet music, the reverent air,
The solemn hush and the voice of prayer,

Filled all her baby soul with awe,
As she sat in her little place,
And the holy look that the angels wear
Seemed pictured upon her face.

And the sweet words uttered so long ago
Came into my mind with a rhythmic flow :
" Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," said He,
And I knew that He spake of such as she.

The sweet-voiced organ pealed forth again,
The collection-box came round,
And Baby dropped her penny in,
And smiled at the clinking sound.
Alone in the choir Aunt Nellie stood,
Waiting the close of the soft prelude,
To begin her solo. High and strong
She struck the first note, clear and long.

She held it, and all were charmed but one,
Who, with all the might she had,
Sprang to her little feet and cried :
" *Aunt Nellie, you's being bad !* "
The audience smiled, the minister coughed,
The little boys in the corner laughed,
The tenor-man shook like an aspen leaf
And hid his face in his handkerchief.

And poor Aunt Nellie never could tell
How she finished that terrible strain,
But says that nothing on earth would tempt
Her to go through the scene again.
So, we have decided, perhaps 'tis best,
For her sake, ours, and all the rest,
That we wait, maybe for a year or two,
Ere our Baby re-enter the family pew.

MINNIE M. GOW.



GOOD-NIGHT.

DESTROYER ! what do you here—here by my poor little nest ?

What have I done that your shadow lies on my brightest and best ?

If 'twas my sin that smirched the cross on the door, O Death,

Blood of mine should efface it, and not this Innocent's passing breath.

O cruel to drench the fleece of my one little lamb with thy dew !

O sightless to quench the light in eyes so guileless and true !

O heartless and brainless to still the life in this hand that glows,

And the love and the thought that breed in these wide, grey-fading brows !

The sweet, unfaltering voice, " Papa, do you think I shall die ? "

" Die, my dear ? All's in God's hands, but I think—so think not I,

You will live to be a big man ; and when I am old and grey,

You shall take me by the arm and guide me along the way.

" But if it should be death, do you know what it is, little one ?

It is only a falling asleep, and you wake and the darkness is gone.

And mamma and papa will sleep too ; and when that
the day is come

We shall meet all together in heaven—in heaven in-
stead of at home.

“Don’t you know that, asleep in your bed, an hour
like a moment seems ?

Be not afraid of that !—it is past in a night without
dreams.

We are only apart, dear child, ’twixt the evening and
morning light ! ”

“Good-night, then, papa, and God bless you ! ”

“My darling, my darling, good-night ! ”

FREDERICK GREENWOOD.



HIS MAJESTY THE BABY.

His eyes of clear and cloudless brown,

His hair a soft and silky down,

His face the sweetest, all must own :

 You recognise him, maybe ?

We know but one such words could suit,

But one whose will is past dispute,

Whose sovereign law is absolute :

 His Majesty the Baby !

No mightier monarch e’er was known,

His right divine we gladly own,

For it is based on love alone :

 A right which knows no maybe.

A sceptre this we gladly kiss,

And own our saddest moment this :

When for the briefest space we miss

 His Majesty the Baby !

We know not what before him lies,
What shall await him—smiles or sighs,
A stormy path, or sunny skies :
These things may not or may be.
Whate'er the great Unknown shall bring,
We fear it not while we can sing
With trustful hearts, God save our King,
His Majesty the Baby !

A. CHARLES HAMILTON.



SONG OF EARLY RISING.

GET up, little sister, the morning is bright,
And the birds are all singing to welcome the light ;
The buds are all opening—the dew's on the flower,
If you shake but a branch, see, there falls quite a
shower.

By the side of their mothers, look, under the trees,
How the young lambs are skipping about as they please ;
And by all those rings on the water, I know,
The fishes are merrily swimming below.

The bee, I daresay, has been long on the wing,
To get honey from every flower of the spring ;
For the bee never idles, but labours all day,
And thinks, wise little insect, work better than play.

The lark's singing gaily, it loves the bright sun,
And rejoices that now the gay spring is begun ;
For the spring is so cheerful, I think 'twould be wrong
If we do not feel happy to hear the lark's song.

Get up, for when all things are merry and glad,
Good children should never be lazy and sad ;
For God gives us daylight, dear sister, that we
May rejoice like the lark, and may work like the bee.

LADY FLORA HASTINGS.



TO A BUTTERFLY.

BUTTERFLY, butterfly, brilliant and bright,
How very often I envy your flight ;
I think I should like through the whole summer day,
Like you, pretty insect, to flutter and play.

Butterfly, butterfly, onward you fly—
Now skimming so lowly, now rising so high,
First on the jessamine, then on the rose,
Then you will visit the pinks, I suppose.

Now you are resting, pray let me come near ;
I will not hurt you, nor touch you, don't fear ;
Mamma says my hand is too heavy by far,
To touch such little creatures as butterflies are.

Now you are off again. Butterfly, stay ;
Don't fly away from me, butterfly, pray,
Just let me look at your beautiful wings ;
Oh ! it does not mind me, but upward it springs.

LADY FLORA HASTINGS.



THE WAIL OF THE CORNISH MOTHER.

THEY say 'tis a sin to sorrow,
That what God doth is best ;
But 'tis only a month to-morrow
I buried it from my breast.

I thought it would call me Mother,
The very first words it said ;
O, I never can love another
Like the blessèd babe that's dead.

Well, God is its own dear Father,
It was carried to church and bless'd ;
And our Saviour's arms will gather
Such children to their rest.

I will make my best endeavour
That my sins may be forgiven :
I will serve God more than ever,
To meet my child in heaven.

I will check this foolish sorrow,
For what God doth is best—
But O, 'tis a month to-morrow
I buried it from my breast !

R. S. HAWKER.



LITTLE BREECHES.

I DON'T go much on religion,
I never ain't had no show ;
But I've got a middlin' tight grip, sir,
On the handful o' things I know.
I don't pan out on the prophets
And free-will, and that sort o' thing—
But I b'lieve in God and the angels,
Ever since one night last spring.

I come into town with some turnips,
And my little Gabe came along—
No four-year-old in the county
Could beat him for pretty and strong.
Peart and chipper and sassy,
Always ready to swear and fight—
And I'd learnt him to chaw terbacker
Just to keep his milk-teeth white.

The snow come down like a blanket
As I passed by Taggart's Store ;
I went in for a jug of molasses
And left the team at the door.
They scared at something and started—
I heard one little squall,
And hell-to-split over the prairie
Went team, Little Breeches and all.

Hell-to-split over the prairie !
I was almost froze with skeer ;
But we roused up some torches
And searched for 'em far and near.

At last we struck hosses and wagon,
Snowed under a soft white mound,
Upsot, dead beat—but of little Gabe
No hide nor hair was found.

And here all hope soured on me,
Of my fellow-critters' aid—
I just flopped down on my marrow-bones,
Crotch-deep in the snow, and prayed.

.
By this the torches was played out,
And me and Isrul Parr
Went off for some wood to a sheepfold
That he said was somewhere thar.

We found it at last, and a little shed
Where they shut up the lambs at night,
We looked in and seen them huddled thar,
So warm and sleepy and white ;
And thar sot little Breeches and chirped,
As peart as ever you see,
“I want a chaw of terbacker,
And that's what's the matter of me.”

How did he get thar? Angels.
He could never have walked in that storm ;
They just scooped down and toted him
To whar it was safe and warm.
And I think that saving a little child
And fetching him to his own,
Is a derned sight better business
Than loafing around The Throne.

JOHN HAY.

PRAYING FOR SHOES.

A TRUE INCIDENT.

ON a dark November morning
A lady walked slowly down
The thronged tumultuous thoroughfare
Of an ancient seaport town.

Of a winning and gracious beauty,
The peace of her pure young face
Was soft as the gleam of angels' dream
In the calms of a heavenly place.

Her eyes were fountains of pity,
And the sensitive mouth expressed
A longing to set the kind thoughts free
In music that filled her breast.

She met, by a bright shop window,
An urchin timid and thin,
Who, with limbs that shook, and a yearning look,
Was mistily glancing in

At the rows and varied clusters
Of slippers and shoes outspread ;
Some, shimmering keen, but of sombre sheen,
Some purple and green and red.

His pale lips moved and murmured,
But of what she could not hear,
And oft on his folded hands would fall
The round of a bitter tear.

“What troubles you, child?” she asked him,
In a voice like the May-wind sweet,
He turned, and while pointing dolefully
To his naked and bleeding feet—

“I was praying for shoes,” he answered—
“Just look at the splendid show!—
I was praying to God for a single pair,
The sharp stones hurt me so!”

She led him in museful silence
At once through the open door,
And his hope grew bright like a fairy light
That flickered and danced before.

And there he was washed and tended,
And his small brown feet were shod,
And he pondered there on his childish prayer
And the marvellous answer of God.

Above them his keen gaze wandered,
How strangely—from shelf to shelf,
Till it almost seemed that he fondly dreamed
Of looking on God Himself.

The lady bent over and whispered,
“Are you happier now, my lad?”
He started; and all his soul flashed forth
In a gratitude swift and glad.

“Happy?—Oh, yes!—I am happy!”
Then—wonder with reverence rife—
His eyes aglow, and his voice sunk low,
“Please tell me, are you God’s wife?”

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE.

THE BETTER LAND.

“ I HEAR thee speak of the better land,
Thou call'st its children a happy band :
Mother ! oh, where is that radiant shore ?
Shall we not seek it, and weep no more ?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fire-flies glance through the myrtle boughs ? ”
—“ Not there, not there, my child ! ”

“ Is it where the feathery palm-trees rise,
And the date grows ripe under sunny skies ?
Or 'midst the green islands of glittering seas,
Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,
And strange, bright birds on their starry wings
Bear the rich hues of all glorious things ? ”
—“ Not there, not there, my child ! ”

“ Is it far away, in some region old,
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold ?—
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand ?—
Is it there, sweet mother ! that better land ? ”
—“ Not there, not there, my child ! ”

“ Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy !
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy :
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair—
Sorrow and death may not enter there :
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom,
For beyond the clouds, and beyond the tomb,
It is there, it is there, my child ! ”

FELICIA HEMANS.

THE GRAVES OF A HOUSEHOLD.

THEY grew in beauty, side by side,
They filled one home with glee ;
Their graves are severed, far and wide,
By mount, and stream, and sea.

The same fond mother bent at night
O'er each fair sleeping brow ;
She had each folded flower in sight—
Where are those dreamers now ?

One 'midst the forest of the West,
By a dark stream is laid—
The Indian knows his place of rest
Far in the cedar shade.

The sea, the blue lone sea, hath one—
He lies where pearls lie deep ;
He was the loved of all, yet none
O'er his low bed may weep.

One sleeps where southern vines are dressed
Above the noble slain :
He wrapt his colours round his breast
On a blood-red field of Spain.

And one—o'er *her* the myrtle showers
Its leaves by soft winds fanned ;
She faded 'midst Italian flowers—
The last of that bright band.

And parted thus they rest, who played
Beneath the same green tree ;
Whose voices mingled as they prayed
Around one parent knee !

They that with smiles lit up the hall,
And cheered with songs the hearth—
Alas ! for love, if *thou* wert all,
And naught beyond, oh Earth !

FELICIA HEMANS.



THE CHILD'S FIRST GRIEF.

“ OH ! call my Brother back to me
I cannot play alone ;
The summer comes with flower and bee—
Where is my Brother gone ?

The butterfly is dancing bright
Across the sunbeam's track ;
I care not now to chase its flight—
Oh ! call my Brother back !

The flowers run wild—the flowers we sow'd
Around our garden tree ;
Our vine is drooping with its load—
Oh ! call him back to me ! ”

“ He could not hear thy voice, fair child,
He may not come to thee ;
The face that once like spring-time smiled
No more on earth thou'lt see.

A rose's brief bright life of joy,
Such unto him was given ;
Go—thou must play alone, my boy !
Thy Brother is in heaven ! ”

“ And has he left his birds and flowers,
And must I call in vain ?
And, through the long, long summer hours,
Will he not come again ?

And by the brook, and in the glade,
Are all our wanderings o'er ?
Oh ! while my Brother with me play'd,
Would I had loved him more.”

FELICIA HEMANS.



THE CHILD'S LAST SLEEP.

SUGGESTED BY A MONUMENT OF CHANTREY'S.

THOU sleepest—but when wilt thou wake, fair child ?
When the fawn awakes in the forest wild ?
When the lark's wing mounts with the breeze of morn ?
When the first rich breath of the rose is born ?—
Lonely thou sleepest ! yet something lies
Too deep and still on thy soft-sealed eyes ;
Mournful, though sweet, is thy rest to see—
When will the hour of thy rising be ?

Not when the fawn wakes— not when the lark
On the crimson cloud of the morn floats dark.
Grief with vain passionate tears hath wet
The hair, shedding gleams from thy pale brow yet ;

Love, with sad kisses unfelt, hath pressed
Thy meek-dropt eyelids and quiet breast ;
And the glad spring, calling out bird and bee,
Shall colour all blossoms, fair child ! but thee.

Thou'rt gone from us, bright one !—that *thou* should'st
die,

And life be left to the butterfly ! *

Thou'rt gone as a dewdrop is swept from the bough :

Oh ! for the world where thy home is now !

How may we love but in doubt and fear,

How may we anchor our fond hearts here ;

How should e'en joy but a trembler be,

Beautiful dust ! when we look on thee.

FELICIA HEMANS.



DIRGE OF A CHILD.

No bitter tears for thee be shed,

Blossom of being ! seen and gone !

With flowers alone we strew thy bed,

Oh blest departed one !

Whose all of life, a rosy ray,

Blush'd into dawn and pass'd away.

Yes ! thou art fled, ere guilt had power

To stain thy cherub-soul and form,

Closed is the soft ephemeral flower

That never felt a storm !

The sunbeam's smile, the zephyr's breath,

All that it knew from birth to death.

* A butterfly, as if resting on a flower, is sculptured on the monument.

Thou wert so like a form of light,
That heaven benignly call'd thee hence,
Ere yet the world could breathe one blight
O'er thy sweet innocence :
And thou, that brighter home to bless,
Art pass'd, with all thy loveliness !

Oh ! hadst thou still on earth remain'd,
Vision of beauty ! fair, as brief !
How soon thy brightness had been stain'd
With passion or with grief !
Now not a sullying breath can rise
To dim thy glory in the skies.

We rear no marble o'er thy tomb—
No sculptured image there shall mourn ;
Ah ! fitter far the vernal bloom
Such dwelling to adorn.
Fragrance, and flowers, and dews, must be
The only emblems meet for thee.

Thy grave shall be a blessed shrine,
Adorn'd with Nature's brightest wreath ;
Each glowing season shall combine
Its incense there to breathe ;
And oft, upon the midnight air,
Shall viewless harps be murmuring there.

And oh ! sometimes in visions blest,
Sweet spirit visit our repose ;
And bear, from thine own world of rest,
Some balm for human woes !
What form more lovely could be given
Than thine to messenger of heaven ?

FELICIA HEMANS.

UPON A CHILD THAT DIED.

HERE she lies, a pretty bud,
Lately made of flesh and blood ;
Who as soon fell fast asleep
As her little eyes did peep.
Give her strewings, but not stir
The earth that lightly covers her.

ROBERT HERRICK.



THE SNOW MAN.

A STORY OF CHRISTMAS-EVE.

It was the eve of Christmas Day,
And in a garden cold and grey,
A Snow-man stood and listened.
His features sparkled in repose,
His eyes were shut, and on his nose
A frozen dew-drop glistened.

The Snow-man coughed and crossly said,
" I guess those kids have gone to bed,
It's like 'em to forgit me.
This silly pipe's gone out—too bad !
And now to make me extra mad,
My top-hat doesn't fit me ! "

Just then across the garden came
Another guest. What was his name ?
His very looks express'd it !
His face was big and red and round—
Why, Father Christmas, I'll be bound !
Well there, you see, you've guess'd it !

He moved as softly as a mouse,
But as he tip-toed to the house,
The Snow-man started sneezing ;
“ Oh, let me come in too ! ” he cried,
“ I’m tired of standing here outside,
My poor old toes are freezing ! ”

They peeped within the kitchen door,
Old Tray was sleeping on the floor,
The fire shone bright and rosy.
The Snow-man took the softest chair,
He saw no danger lurking there,
It looked so snug and cosy.

He did not dream that snow could melt,
He only knew the kitchen smelt
Of Christmas pies and holly.
“ Be off ! ” he cried, “ and empt your pack,
I’ll stay right here till you come back ;
My stars, but this is jolly ! ”

Old Father Christmas slowly crept
Upstairs to where the children slept,
He entered without knocking ;
And from his sack, for girls and boys,
He took a lot of lovely toys,
And filled each bulgy stocking.

Then down the stairs he went once more,
But when he reached the kitchen door
He stared around in wonder !
His friend had vanished quite away ;
Old Tray looked grave and seemed to say,
“ That snow-chap’s made a blunder.”

And so he had, for, truth to tell,
The fire had warmed him up too well,
And caused this precious muddle !
The man had melted, limb by limb,
And all they ever found of him,
Was just a nasty puddle !

GRAHAM HILL.



I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER.

I REMEMBER, I remember
The house where I was born,
The little window where the sun
Came peeping in at morn ;
He never came a wink too soon,
Nor brought too long a day,
But now, I often wish the night
Had borne my breath away !

I remember, I remember
The roses, red and white,
The violets and the lily-cups,
Those flowers made of light !
The lilacs where the robin built,
And where my brother set
The laburnum on his birthday—
The tree is living yet !

I remember, I remember
When I was used to swing,
And thought the air must rush as fresh
To swallows on the wing ;

My spirit flew in feathers then,
That is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool
The fever on my brow !

I remember, I remember
The fir trees dark and high ;
I used to think their slender tops
Were close against the sky ;
It was a childish ignorance,
But now 'tis little joy
To know I'm farther off from heaven
Than when I was a boy.

THOMAS HOOD.



QUEEN MAB.

A LITTLE fairy comes at night,
Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown,
With silver spots upon her wings,
And from the moon she flutters down.

She has a little silver wand,
And when a good child goes to bed
She waves her hand from right to left,
And makes a circle round her head.

And then it dreams of pleasant things,
Of fountains filled with fairy fish,
And trees that bear delicious fruit,
And bow their branches at a wish :

Of arbours filled with dainty scents
From lovely flowers that never fade ;
Bright flies that glitter in the sun,
And glow-worms shining in the shade.

And talking birds with gifted tongues,
For singing songs and telling tales,
And pretty dwarfs to show the way
Through fairy hills and fairy dales.

But when a bad child goes to bed,
From left to right she weaves her rings,
And then it dreams all through the night
Of only ugly horrid things !

Then lions come with glaring eyes,
And tigers growl, a dreadful noise,
And ogres draw their cruel knives,
To shed the blood of girls and boys.

Then stormy waves rush on to drown,
Or raging flames come scorching round,
Fierce dragons hover in the air,
And serpents crawl along the ground.

Then wicked children wake and weep,
And wish the long black gloom away ;
But good ones love the dark, and find
The night as pleasant as the day.

THOMAS HOOD.



A PARENTAL ODE TO MY SON,**AGED THREE YEARS AND FIVE MONTHS.**

Thou happy, happy elf !
(But stop,—first let me kiss away that tear)—
Thou tiny image of myself !
(My love, he's poking peas into his ear !)
Thou merry laughing sprite !
With spirits feather-light,
Untouch'd by sorrow, and unsoil'd by sin—
(Good heavens ! the child is swallowing a pin !)
Thou little trickey Puck !
With antic toys so funnily bestuck,
Light as the singing bird that wings the air—
(The door ! the door ! he'll tumble down the stair !)
Thou darling of thy sire !
(Why, Janet, he'll set his pinafore a-fire !)
Thou imp of mirth and joy !
In love's dear chain so strong and bright a link,
Thou idol of thy parents—(Drat the boy !
There goes my ink !)

Thou cherub—but of earth ;
Fit playfellow for Fays, by moonlight pale,
In harmless sport and mirth,
(That dog will bite him if he pulls its tail !)
Thou human humming-bee, extracting honey
From ev'ry blossom in the world that blows,
Singing in Youth's Elysium ever sunny,
(Another tumble !—that's his precious nose !)
Thy father's pride and hope !

(He'll break the mirror with that skipping-rope !)
With pure heart newly stamp'd from Nature's mint,
(Where *did* he learn that squint ?)

The young domestic dove !
(He'll have that jug off, with another shove !)
Dear nursling of the hymeneal nest !
(Are those torn clothes his best ?)
Little epitome of man !
(He'll climb upon the table, that's his plan !)
Touched with the beauteous tints of dawning life—
(He's got a knife !)

Thou enviable being !
No storms, no clouds, in thy blue sky forseeing,
Play on, play on,
My elfin John !
Toss the light ball—bestride the stick—
(I knew so many cakes would make him sick !)
With fancies, buoyant as the thistle-down,
Prompting the face grotesque, and antic brisk,
With many a lamb-like frisk,
(He's got the scissors, snipping at your gown !)
Thou pretty opening rose !
(Go to your mother, child, and wipe your nose !)
Balmy and breathing music like the south,
(He really brings my heart into my mouth !)
Fresh as the morn, and brilliant as its star,—
(I wish that window had an iron bar !)
Bold as the hawk, yet gentle as the dove,
(I tell you what, my love,
I cannot write unless he's sent above !)

THOMAS HOOD.



A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.

O, when I was a tiny boy,
My days and nights were full of joy,
 My mates were blithe and kind !—
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
And dash that tear-drop from my eye,
 To cast a look behind !

A hoop was an eternal round
Of pleasure. In those days I found
 A top a joyous thing ;—
But now those past delights I drop,
My head, alas ! is all my top,
 And careful thoughts the string !

My marbles—once my bag was stored,—
Now I must play with Elgin's lord,
 With Theseus for a taw !
My playful horse has slipt his string,
Forgotten all his capering,
 And harness'd to the law !

My kite—how fast and far it flew !
Whilst I, a sort of Franklin, drew
 My pleasure from the sky !
'Twas paper'd o'er with studious themes,
The tasks I wrote—my present dreams
 Will never soar as high !

My joys are wingless all and dead ;
My dumps are made of more than lead ;
 My flights soon find a fall ;
My fears prevail, my fancies droop,
Joy never cometh with a hoop,
 And seldom with a call !

My football's laid upon the shelf ;
I am a shuttlecock myself
 The world knocks to and fro ;—
My archery is all unlearned,
And grief against myself has turn'd
 My arrows and my bow !

No more in noontide sun I bask ;
My authorship's an endless task,
 My head's ne'er out of school :
My heart is pain'd with scorn and slight,
I have too many foes to fight,
 And friends grown strangely cool !

The very chum that shared my cake
Holds out so cold a hand to shake,
 It makes me shrink and sigh :—
On this I will not dwell and hang—
The changeling would not feel a pang,
 Though these should meet his eye !

No skies so blue or so serene
As then ;—no leaves looked half so green
 As clothed the playground tree !
All things I loved are altered so,
Nor does it ease my heart to know
 That change resides in me !

O for the garb, that mark'd the boy,
The trousers made of corduroy,
 Well ink'd with black and red ;
The crownless hat, ne'er deem'd an ill—
It only let the sunshine still
 Repose upon my head !

O for the riband round the neck !
The careless dogs'-ears apt to check
 My book and collar both !
How can this formal man be styled
Merely an Alexandrine child,
 A boy of larger growth ?

O for that small, small beer anew !
And (heaven's own type) that mild sky-blue
 That wash'd my sweet meals down ;
The master even !—and that small Turk
That fagg'd me !—worse is now my work—
 A fag for all the town !

O for the lessons learn'd by heart !
Ay, though the very birch's smart
 Should mark these hours again ;
I'd "kiss the rod," and be resign'd
Beneath the stroke, and even find
 Some sugar in the cane !

The Arabian Nights rehearsed in bed !
The Fairy Tales in school-time read,
 By stealth, 'twixt verb and noun !
The angel form that always walk'd
In all my dreams, and look'd, and talk'd
 Exactly like Miss Brown.

The *omne bene*—Christmas come !
The prize of merit, won for home—
 Merit had prizes then !
But now I write for days and days,
For fame—a deal of empty praise,
 Without the silver pen !

Then "home, sweet home!" the crowded coach—
The joyous shout—the loud approach—
 The winding horns like rams' !
The meeting sweet that made me thrill,
The sweetmeats, almost sweeter still,
 No "satis" to the "jams" !—

When that I was a tiny boy
My days and nights were full of joy,
 My mates were blythe and kind !
No wonder that I sometimes sigh,
And dash the tear-drop from my eye,
 To cast a look behind !

THOMAS HOOD.



GOOD-NIGHT AND GOOD-MORNING.

A FAIR little girl sat under a tree,
Sewing as long as her eyes could see,
Then smoothed her work, and folded it right,
And said, "Dear work, good-night ! good-night !"

Such a number of rooks came over her head,
Crying "Caw ! caw !" on their way to bed ;
She said, as she watched their curious flight,
"Little black things, good-night ! good-night !"

The horses neighed, and the oxen lowed ;
The sheep's "bleat ! bleat !" came over the road ;
All seeming to say, with a quiet delight,
"Good little girl, good-night ! good-night !"

She did not say to the sun, "Good-night!"
Though she saw him there like a ball of light,
For she knew he had God's time to keep
All over the world, and never could sleep.

The tall pink foxglove bowed his head,
The violets curtsied and went to bed;
And good little Lucy tied up her hair,
And said, on her knees, her favourite prayer.

And while on her pillow she softly lay,
She knew nothing more till again it was day:
And all things said to the beautiful sun,
"Good-morning, good-morning! our work is begun."

LORD HOUGHTON.



LITTLE CHILDREN.

SPORTING through the forest wide:
Playing by the waterside;
Wandering o'er the heathy fells
Down within the woodland dells;
All among the mountains wild,
Dwelleth many a little child!
In the baron's hall of pride,
By the poor man's dull fireside;
'Mid the mighty, 'mid the mean,
Little children may be seen,
Like the flowers that spring up fair,
Bright and countless, everywhere.

In the far isles of the main ;
In the desert's lone domain ;
In the savage mountain glen,
'Mong the tribes of swarthy men ;
Wheresoe'er a foot hath gone,
Wheresoe'er the sun hath shone
On a league of peopled ground,
Little children may be found !
Blessings on them ! they in me
Move a kindly sympathy,
With their wishes, hopes, and fears ;
With their laughter and their tears ;
With their wonder so intense,
And their small experience !

Little children, not alone
On the wide earth are ye known ;
'Mid its labours and its cares,
'Mid its sufferings and its snares ;
Free from sorrow, free from strife,
In the world of love and life,
Where no sinful thing hath trod,
In the presence of your God,
Spotless, blameless, glorified,
Little children, ye abide !

MARY HOWITT.



BUTTERCUPS AND DAISIES.

BUTTERCUPS and daises,
O, the pretty flowers,
Coming ere the springtime,
To tell of sunny hours,

While the trees are leafless,
While the fields are bare,
Buttercups and daises
Spring up here and there.

Ere the snowdrop peepeth,
Ere the crocus bold,
Ere the early primrose
Opes its paly gold—
Somewhere on the sunny bank
Buttercups are bright,
Somewhere 'mong the frozen grass
Peeps the daisy white.

Little hardy flowers,
Like to children poor,
Playing in their sturdy health
By their mother's door.
Purple with the north wind,
Yet alert and bold,
Fearing not, and caring not,
Though they be a-cold !

What to them is winter !
What are stormy showers !
Buttercups and daises
Are these human flowers !
He who gave them hardships
And a life of care,
Gave them likewise hardy strength
And patient hearts to bear.

MARY HOWITT.



FATHER IS COMING.

THE clock is on the stroke of six,
The father's work is done ;
Sweep up the hearth, and mend the fire,
And put the kettle on :
The wild night-wind is blowing cold,
'Tis dreary crossing o'er the wold.

He is crossing o'er the wold apace,
He is stronger than the storm ;
He does not feel the cold, not he,
His heart it is so warm :
For father's heart is stout and true
As ever human bosom knew.

He makes all toil, all hardship light ;
Would all men were the same !
So ready to be pleased, so kind,
So very slow to blame !
Folks need not be unkind, austere ;
For love hath readier will than fear.

Nay, do not close the shutters, child,
For far along the lane
The little window looks, and he
Can see it shining plain ;
I've heard him say he loves to mark
The cheerful firelight, through the dark.

And we'll do all that father likes ;
His wishes are so few :
Would they were more ! that every hour
Some wish of his I knew !
I'm sure it makes a happy day,
When I can please him any way.

I know he's coming by this sign,
That baby's almost wild ;
See how he laughs, and crows, and stares—
Heaven bless the merry child !
His father's self in face and limb.
And father's heart is strong in him,

Hark ! hark ! I hear his footsteps now,
He's through the garden gate :
Run, little Bess, and ope the door,
And do not let him wait.
Shout, baby, shout ! and clap thy hands,
For father on the threshold stands.

MARY HOWITT.



TO T. L. H.,

SIX YEARS OLD, DURING A SICKNESS.

SLEEP breathes at last from out thee,
My little, patient boy ;
And balmy rest about thee
Smooths off the day's annoy.
I sit me down, and think
Of all thy winning ways ;
Yet almost wish, with sudden shrink,
That I had less to praise.

Thy sidelong pillowed meekness,
Thy thanks to all that aid,
Thy heart, in pain and weakness,
Of fancied faults afraid ;
The little trembling hand
That wipes thy quiet tears,—
These, these are things that may demand
Dread memories for years.

Sorrows I've had, severe ones,
I will not think of now ;
And calmly, midst my dear ones,
Have wasted with dry brow ;
But when thy fingers press
And pat my stooping head,
I cannot bear the gentleness,—
The tears are in their bed.

Ah, first-born of thy mother,
When life and hope were new,
Kind playmate of thy brother,
Thy sister, father too ;
My light, where'er I go,
My bird, when prison-bound,
My hand-in-hand companion,—no,
My prayers shall hold thee round.

To say " He has departed "—
" His voice "—" his face "—is gone ;
To feel impatient-hearted,
Yet feel we must bear on ;
Ah, I could not endure
To whisper of such woe,
Unless I felt this sleep ensure
That it will not be so.

Yes, still he's fixed and sleeping !
This silence too the while—
Its very hush and creeping
Seem whispering us a smile :
Something divine and dim
Seems going by one's ear,
Like parting wings of Cherubim,
Who say, " We've finished here."

LEIGH HUNT.

ON MY FIRST DAUGHTER.

HERE lies, to each her parents' ruth,
Mary, the daughter of their youth ;
Yet all Heaven's gifts being Heaven's due,
It makes the father less to rue.
At six months' end she parted hence,
With safety of her innocence ;
Whose soul Heaven's Queen (whose name she bears),
In comfort of her mother's tears,
Hath placed among her virgin train ;
Where, while that, severed, doth remain,
This grave partakes the fleshly birth ;
Which cover lightly, gentle earth !

BEN JONSON.



ON MY FIRST SON.

FAREWELL, thou child of my right hand and joy :
My sin was too much hope of thee, loved boy :
Seven years thou wert lent to me, and I thee pay,
Exacted by thy faith on the just day.
O, could I lose all father now ! for why
Will man lament the state he should envy ?
To have so soon 'scaped world's and flesh's rage,
And if no other misery, yet age !
Rest in soft peace, and asked, say here doth lie
Ben Jonson his best piece of poetry,
For whose sake henceforth all his vows be such
As what he loves may never like too much.

BEN JONSON.

INNOCENTS' DAY.

It was in the night of a winter mild,
Joseph and Mary talked and smiled ;
And with them journeyed the Heavenly Child.

“ Mother, three days has my birth-day flown ;
What gifts wilt thou give for my birth-day crown ? ”
They came to the street of a Kentish town.

They stayed where a boy of twelve years old
Pored over an ancient book unrolled ;
His cheeks were burning, his hands were cold.

“ I struggle through darkness to know Thy word ;
Give me Thy grace, and Thy help afford,
That some day I may be Thy servant, Lord ! ”

A hand on his shoulder Jesus laid :
“ Come with me to my school,” He said ;
And the boy went with them unafraid.

A maiden pallid with gasping breath,
The dew on her forehead, kneels, and saith,
“ Take not my heart from Thy heart in death ! ”

Through the rising waters the tapers swim ;—
She felt His kiss as her eyes grew dim :
“ Be mine ! ” He whispered—she went with Him.

Stupified, shivering, at midnight's turn,
A child with its lesson yet to learn,
Cowered under the rod of a master stern.

“Come quick to my garden, come away !
Where I and my brothers always play.”
The child knew nothing but to obey.

They passed under broken walls, and hark !
They heard a wailing that came through the dark,
No light from the threshold the way to mark.

They followed the crying to find the door,
—Three children huddled close on the floor ;
The tears like rain down their cold cheeks pour.

There was neither fire, nor table, nor bed ;
“We have nothing to eat,” the youngest said ;
And the eldest sobbed out, “Mother is dead.”

The mother folded them safe from harm,
Her breast was soft, and her lap was warm ;
Saint Joseph the basket took from his arm :

“I plucked these cherries in Paradise Row,
Where my strawberry garden slopes below ;
They are finer than any in Kent that grow.”

“Nay ; but, Sir Joseph,” our Lady said,
“It is so long since they last were fed ;
Give them the cherries, but first the bread.

“Finest wheat flour from Holy Land,
Rock honey that dropped on the silver sand ;
I kneaded them into cakes with my hand.”

They went on their way with a gathering train ;
The little childrep followed full fain,—
“Father Joseph, give us the cakes again !”

The window was open into the night,—
A little chamber spotless and white,
And in the chamber a little light ;

By a little picture the light burned dim,
The Child and His mother carrying Him—
Two children rosy and sound of limb :—

The innocent children had said their prayers,
Their souls were out dreaming unawares,
No bar betwixt them and the golden stairs.

His hand on their foreheads lightly lies,
He said as He kissed their closed eyes :—
“ Wake with me to-morrow in Paradise ! ”

A storm of blows and of curses rolled,
Where a woman, unwomanly, hag and scold,
Shook her babe, her own, of two years old—

A little creature, lovely and meek ;
Only the tears on its soft wet cheek
Pleaded the want that it could not speak.

The eyes of our Lady flashed with fire,
She snatched the child, and her breast heaved higher,
“ O treasure of mine ! my heart's desire ! ”

A babe was rocked on its mother's breast,
Its tiny fingers like wax imprest,
Its sorrowful moaning would not rest :

The little face piteous and white to see ;
But the Boy bent over her eagerly :
“ Mother, O mother, give her to me ! ”

He stretched His arms ;—but our Lady sighed,
For she looked on the mother weary-eyed ;
Softly she stepped, and stood beside.

Some word in her ear she seemed to say,
As she drew the babe from her arms away,
And calm in her own Child's arms it lay.

At midnight the good priest knelt in prayer.
He had watched through the midnight many a year,
Not knowing what time would our Lord appear.

And all of a sudden he was aware
Of a strange light shining everywhere.
He went to his casement, and looked out there.

And he saw a procession of girls and boys,
Laughing and playing with silvery noise ;
Singing sweet hymns of the angels' joys.

Into the churchyard they trooped and came,
He knew each face, and he named each name,
And yet they were somehow not the same.

And amidst them a lady fair to see ;—
The little ones clung to her mantle free,
And she carried one of them tenderly.

And a white-haired father, tall and kind
His face to the childrens' face inclined,
Holding their hands as they walked behind.

And last of all came a Boy, whose air
Was that of a king, with golden hair,
Carrying a babe with exceeding care.

He caught the face of the Boy as He passed ;—
He fell on his knees and his tears fell fast ;
“ My Lord,” he said, “ hast Thou come at last ? ”

Next day, as the sexton worked long and hard,
He said, “ A green Yule makes a fat churchyard ; ”
But the priest, “ God has them within His guard.”

MRS. HAMILTON KING.



THE CHILDREN.

FATHER and mother, many a year
In rain and sunshine we have lived here,
And the children—
And now that the winter days are come,
We wait and rest in our own old home ;—
But where are the children ?

All^oso young, in the times of old
Not a lamb was missing from our fold,
And the children—
God's ways are narrow, the world is wide,
I would have guarded them at my side ;—
But where are the children ?

We walk to the house of God alone,
From the last year's nest the birds have flown,
And the children—
Alone by the silent hearth we sit,
The chambers are ready, the fires are lit ;—
But where are the children ?

My life is failing, my hair is grey,
I have seen the old years pass away,
 And the children—
My steps are feeble, my voice is low,
I am longing to bless you ere I go ;—
 But where are the children ?

I had a dream of another home ;
I thought when He called us I should come,
 And the children—
And say, at the feet of our Father in Heaven,
Here am I, with those Thou hast given ;—
 But where are the children ?

The day of the Lord is coming on ;
We shall meet again before God's throne,
 And the children—
Father and mother, we trust shall stand
Together then at God's right hand :—
 But where are the children ?

MRS. HAMILTON KING.



CHILDHOOD.

IN my poor mind it is most sweet to muse
Upon the days gone by ; to act in thought
Past season's o'er, and be again a child ;
To sit in fancy on the turf-clad slope
Down which the child would roll, to pluck gay flowers,
Make posies in the sun, which the child's hand
(Childhood offended soon, soon reconciled)

Would throw away, and straight take up again,
Then fling them to the winds, and o'er the lawn
Bound with so playful and so light a foot,
That the pressed daisy scarce declined her head.

CHARLES LAMB.



ON AN INFANT DYING AS SOON AS BORN.

I SAW where in the shroud did lurk
A curious frame of Nature's work ;
A flow'ret crushèd in the bud,
A nameless piece of Babyhood,
Was in her cradle-coffin lying ;
Extinct with scarce the sense of dying :
So soon to exchange the imprisoning womb
For darker closet of the tomb !
She did but ope an eye, and put
A clear beam forth, then straight up shut
For the long dark : ne'er more to see
Through glasses of mortality.
Riddle of destiny, who can show
What thy short visit meant, or know,
What thy errand here below ?
Shall we say that Nature blind
Check'd her hand, and changed her mind
Just when she had exactly wrought
A finish'd pattern without fault ?
Could she flag, or could she tire,
Or lacked she the Promethean fire
(With her nine moons' long workings sicken'd)
That should thy little limbs have quicken'd ?

Limbs so firm, they seem'd to assure
Life of health, and days mature :
Woman's self in miniature !
Limbs so fair, they might supply
(Themselves now but cold imagery)
The sculptor to make Beauty by.
Or did the stern-eyed Fate descry
That babe or mother, one must die ;
So in mercy left the stock
And cut the branch ; to save the shock
Of young years widow'd, and the pain
When Single State come back again
To the lone man who, reft of wife,
Thenceforward drags a maimèd life ?
The economy of Heaven is dark,
And wisest clerks have missed the mark
Why human buds, like this, should fall
More brief than fly ephemeral
That has his day ; while shrivell'd crones
Stiffen with age to stocks and stones ;
And crabbed use the conscience sears
In sinners of an hundred years.
—Mother's prattle, mother's kiss,
Baby fond, thou ne'er wilt miss :
Rites, which custom does impose,
Silver bells, and baby clothes ;
Coral redder than those lips
Which pale death did late eclipse ;
Music framed for infants' glee,
Whistle never tuned for thee ;
Though thou want'st not, thou shalt have them,
Loving hearts were they which gave them.
Let not one be missing ; nurse,
See them laid upon the hearse

Of infant slain by doom perverse.
Why should kings and nobles have
Pictured trophies to their grave,
And we, churls, to thee deny
Thy pretty toys with thee to lie—
A more harmless vanity?

CHARLES LAMB.



THE NEW-BORN INFANT.

WHETHER beneath sweet beds of roses,
As foolish little Ann supposes,
The spirit of a babe reposes
Before it to the body come ;
Or, as philosophy more wise
Thinks, it descended from the skies,
We know the babe's now in the room.

And that is all which is quite clear,
Even to philosophy, my dear.
The God that made us can alone
Reveal from whence a spirit's brought
Into young life, to light, and thought ;
And this the wisest man must own.

We'll talk now of the babe's surprise
When first he opens his new eyes,
And first receives delicious food,
Before the age of six or seven,
To mortal children is not given
Much reason, else I think he would

(And very naturally) wonder
What happy star he was born under,
That he should be the only care,
Of the dear, sweet, food-giving lady,
Who fondly calls him her own baby,
Her darling hope, her infant heir.

MARY LAMB.



FEIGNED COURAGE.

HORATIO, of ideal courage vain,
Was flourishing in air his father's cane,
And, as the fumes of valour swelled his pate,
Now thought himself *this* hero, and now *that* ;
“ And now,” he cried, “ I will Achilles be :
My sword I brandish, see, the Trojans flee.
Now I'll be Hector when his angry blade
A lane through heaps of slaughtered Grecians made !
And now by deeds still braver I'll convince,
I am no less than Edward the Black Prince.
Give way, ye coward French ! ” As thus he spoke,
And aimed in fancy a sufficient stroke
To fix the fate of Cressy or Poitiers
(The nurse relates the hero's fate with tears) ;
He struck his milk-white hand against a nail,
Sees his own blood, and feels his courage fail.
Ah ! where is now that boasted valour flown,
That in the tented field so late was shown ?
Achilles weeps, great Hector hangs his head !
And the Black Prince goes whimpering to bed.

MARY LAMB.

ROSE AYLMER.

Ан, what avails the sceptred race !
Ah, what the form divine !
What every virtue ! every grace !
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and sighs
I consecrate to thee.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.



CHILDREN.

CHILDREN are what the mothers are.
No fondest father's fondest care
Can fashion so the infant heart
As those creative beams that dart,
With all their hopes and fears, upon
The cradle of a sleeping son.

His startled eyes with wonder see
A father near him on his knee,
Who wishes all the while to trace
The mother in his future face ;
But 'tis to her alone uprise
His wakening arms ; to her those eyes
Open with joy and not surprise.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

CHILD OF A DAY.

CHILD of a day, thou knowest not
The tears that overflow thine urn,
The gushing eyes that read thy lot,
Nor, if thou knewest, couldst return !

And why the wish ? the pure and blest
Watch like thy mother o'er thy sleep,
O peaceful night ! O envied rest !
Thou wilt not ever see her weep.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

CHILDREN PLAYING IN A CHURCH-
YARD.

CHILDREN, keep up that harmless play ;
Your kinder angels plainly say,
By God's authority, ye may.

Be prompt His holy word to hear,
It teaches you to banish fear ;
The lesson lies on all sides near.

Ten summers hence the spriteliest lad,
In Nature's face will look more sad,
And ask where are those smiles she had.

Ere many days the last will close . . .
Play on, play on ; for then (who knows ?)
He who plays here may here repose.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

THE OLD CRADLE.

AND this was your cradle? Why surely, my Jenny,
Such cosy dimensions go clearly to show,
You were an exceedingly small piccaninny
Some nineteen or twenty short summers ago.

Your baby-days flowed in a much-troubled channel,
I see you as then, in your impotent strife,
A light little bundle of wailing and flannel,
Perplexed with the newly found fardel of Life.

To hint at infantile frailty's a scandal;
Let by-gones be by-gones, for somebody knows
It was bliss such a baby to dance and to dandle,—
Your cheeks were so dimpled, so rosy your toes.

Aye, here is your Cradle; and Hope, a bright spirit,
With Love now is watching beside it, I know,
They guard the wee nest it was yours to inherit
Some nineteen or twenty short summers ago.

It is Hope gilds the future, Love welcomes it smiling;
Thus wags this old world, therefore stay not to ask,
“My future bids fair, is my future beguiling?”
If mask'd, still it pleases—then raise not its mask.

Is Life a poor coil some would gladly be doffing?
He is riding post haste who their wrongs will adjust;
For at most it's a footstep from cradle to coffin—
From a spoonful of pap to a mouthful of dust.

Then smile as your future is smiling, my Jenny ;
I see you, except for those infantine woes,
Little changed since you were but a small piccaninny—
Your cheeks were so dimpled, so rosy your toes ;

Ay, here is the Cradle, much, much to my liking,
Though nineteen or twenty long winters have sped,
Hark ! as I'm talking there's six o'clock striking,—
It is time *Jenny's Baby* should be in its bed.

FREDERICK LOCKER.



THE WIDOW'S MITE.

A widow—she had only one !
A puny and decrepit son ;
But, day and night,
Though fretful oft, and weak and small,
A loving child, he was her all—
The Widow's Mite.

The Widow's Mite—ay, so sustain'd,
She battled onward, nor complain'd
Tho' friends were fewer ;
And while she toiled for daily fare,
A little crutch upon the stair
Was music to her.

I saw her then—and now I see
That, though resign'd and cheerful, she
Has sorrow'd much :
She has, He gave it tenderly,
Much faith ; and, carefully laid by,
A little crutch.

FREDERICK LOCKER.

CHILDREN.

COME to me, O ye children,
For I hear you at your play,
And the questions that perplex me
Have vanished quite away.

Ye open the eastern windows,
That look towards the sun,
Where thoughts are singing swallows
And the brooks of morning run.

In your hearts are the birds and the sunshine,
In your thoughts the brooklets flow ;
But in mine is the wind of Autumn,
And the first fall of the snow.

Ah ! what would the world be to us,
If the children were no more.
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before.

What the leaves are to the forest,
With light and air for food,
Ere their sweet and tender juices
Have been hardened into wood,—

That to the world are children ;
Through them it feels the glow
Of a brighter and a sunnier climate
Than reaches the trunks below.

Come to me, O ye children !
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

For what are all our contrivings,
And the wisdom of our books,
When compared with your caresses,
And the gladness of your looks ?

You are better than all the ballads
That ever were sung or said ;
For ye are living poems,
And all the rest are dead.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.



THE CHILDREN'S HOUR.

BETWEEN the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day's occupations
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me
The patter of little feet,
The sound of a door that is opened,
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,
Descending the broad hall stair,
Grave Annie and laughing Allegra,
And Alice with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence ;
Yet I know by their merry eyes
They are plotting and planning together
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,
A sudden raid from the hall !
By three doors left unguarded
They enter my castle wall !

They climb up into my turret
O'er the arms and the back of my chair ;
If I try to escape, they surround me ;
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,
Their arms about me entwine,
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen
In his Mouse Tower on the Rhine !

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,
Because you have scaled the wall,
Such an old moustache as I am
Is not a match for you all ?

I have you fast in my fortress,
And will not let you depart,
But put you down into the dungeons
In the round tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you for ever—
Yes, for ever and a day ;
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,
And moulder in dust away.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

THE ANGEL AND THE CHILD.

FROM JEAN REBOUL, THE BAKER OF NISMES.

AN angel with a radiant face
Above a cradle bent to look,
Seemed his own image there to trace,
As in the waters of a brook.

“Dear child ! who me resemblest so,”
It whispered, “Come, O come with me !
Happy together let us go,
The earth unworthy is of thee !

“Here none to perfect bliss attain ;
The soul in pleasure suffering lies :
Joy hath an undertone of pain,
And even the happiest hours their sighs.

“Fear doth at every portal knock ;
Never a day serene and pure
From the o’ershadowing tempest’s shock,
Hath made the morrow’s dawn secure.

“What, then, shall sorrows and shall fears
Come to disturb so pure a brow ?
And with a bitterness of tears
These eyes of azure troubled grow ?

“Ah no ! into the fields of space,
Away shalt thou escape with me ;
And Providence will grant thee grace
Of all the days that were to be.

“ Let no one in thy dwelling cower,
In somber vestments draped and veiled ;
But let them welcome thy last hour,
As thy first moments once they hailed.

“ Without a cloud be there each brow ;
There let the grave no shadow cast ;
When one is pure as thou art now,
The fairest day is still the last.”

And waving wide his wings of white,
The angel, at these words had sped
Towards the eternal realms of light !—
Poor mother ! see, thy son is dead !

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.



THE REAPERS AND THE FLOWERS.

THERE is a Reaper, whose name is Death,
And, with his sickle keen,
He reaps the bearded grain at a breath,
And the flowers that grow between.

“ Shall I have nought that is fair,” saith he ;
“ Have nought but the bearded grain ?
Though the breath of these flowers is sweet to me,
I will give them all back again.”

He gazed at the flowers with tearful eyes,
He kissed their drooping leaves ;
It was for the Lord of Paradise
He bound them in his sheaves.

“ My Lord has need of these flowerets gay,”
The Reaper said, and smiled ;
“ Dear tokens of the earth are they,
Where He was once a child.

“ They shall all bloom in fields of light,
Transplanted by my care,
And saints, upon their garments white,
These sacred blossoms wear.”

And the mother gave, in tears and pain,
The flowers she most did love ;
She knew she should find them all again
In the fields of light above.

O, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
The Reaper came that day ;
’Twas an angel visited the green earth,
And took the flowers away.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.



RESIGNATION.

THERE is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there !
THERE is no fireside, howsoe’er defended,
But has one vacant chair !

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mourning for the dead ;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted !

Let us be patient ! These severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise.

We see but dimly through the mists and vapours ;
Amid these earthly damps,
What seem to us but sad, funereal tapers
May be heaven's distant lamps.

There is no death ! What seems so is transition.
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.

She is not dead—the child of our affection,—
But gone unto that school
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ Himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air ;
Year after year her tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair.

Thus do we walk with her, and keep unbroken
The bond which nature gives,
Thinking that our remembrance, though unspoken,
May reach her where she lives.

Not as a child shall we again behold her ;
For when with raptures wild
In our embraces we again enfold her,
She will not be a child ;

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,
Clothed with celestial grace ;
And beautiful with all the soul's expansion
Shall we behold her face.

And though at times, impetuous with emotion
And anguish long suppressed,
The swelling heart heaves, moaning like the ocean,
That cannot be at rest,—

We will be patient, and assuage the feeling
We may not wholly stay ;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.



THE CHANGELING.

I HAD a little daughter,
And she was given to me
To lead me gently backward
To the Heavenly Father's knee,
That I, by the force of nature,
Might in some dim wise divine
The depth of His infinite patience
To this wayward soul of mine.

I know not how others saw her,
But to me she was wholly fair,
And the light of the heaven she came from
Still lingered and gleamed in her hair ;
For it was wavy and golden,
And as many changes took
As the shadows of sun-gilt ripples
On the yellow bed of a brook.

To what can I liken her smiling
Unto me, her kneeling lover,
How it leaped from her lips to her eyelids
And dimpled her wholly over,
Till her outstretched hands smiled also,
And I almost seemed to see
The very heart of her mother
Sending sun through her veins to me !

She had been with us scarce a twelvemonth,
And it hardly seemed a day,
When a troop of wandering angels
Stole my little daughter away ;
Or perhaps those heavenly Zingari
But loosed the hampering strings,
And when they had opened her cage-door,
My little bird used her wings.

But they left in her stead a changeling,
A little angel child,
That seems like her bud in full blossom,
And smiles as she never smiled ;
When I wake in the morning I see it
Where she always used to lie,
And I feel as weak as a violet
Alone 'neath the awful sky ;

As weak, yet as trustful also ;
For the whole year long I see
All the wonders of faithful Nature
Still worked for the love of me ;
Winds wander, and dews drip earthward,
Rains fall, suns rise and set,
Earth whirls, and all but prosper
A poor little violet.

This child is not mine as the first was,
I cannot sing it to rest,
I cannot lift it up fatherly
And bless it upon my breast ;
Yet it lies in my little one's cradle
And sits in my little one's chair,
And the light of the heaven she's gone to
Transfigures its golden hair.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.



THE FIRST SNOW-FALL.

THE snow had begun in the gloaming,
And busily all the night
Had been heaping field and highway
With a silence deep and white.

Every pine and fir and hemlock
Wore ermine too deep for an earl,
And the poorest twig on the elm-tree
Was ridged inch-deep with pearl.

From sheds new-roofed with Carrara
Came Chanticleer's muffled crow,
The stiff rails were softened to swans'-down,
And still fluttered down the snow.

I stood and watched by the window
The noiseless work of the sky,
And the sudden flurries of snow-birds,
Like brown-leaves whirling by.

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn,
Where a little headstone stood ;
How the flakes were folding it gently,
As did robins the babes in the wood.

Up spoke our own little Mabel,
Saying, " Father, who makes it snow ? "
And I told of the good All-father
Who cares for us here below.

Again I looked at the snow-fall,
And thought of the leaden sky
That arched o'er our first great sorrow,
When that mound was heaped so high.

I remembered the gradual patience
That fell from that cloud like snow,
Flake by flake, healing and hiding
The scar of our deep-plunged woe.

And again to the child I whispered,
" The snow that husheth all,
Darling, the merciful Father
Alone can make it fall ! "

Then, with eyes that saw not, I kissed her ;
And she kissing back could not know
That *my* kiss was given to her sister,
Folded close under deepening snow.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.



AD DOROTHEAM.*

I KNOW where there is honey in a jar,
Meet for a certain little friend of mine,
And, Dorothy, I know where daisies are
That only wait small hands to intertwine
A wreath for such a golden head as thine.

The thought that thou art coming makes all glad,
The house is bright with blossoms, high and low,
And many a little lass and little lad
Expectantly are running to and fro,
The fire within our hearts is all aglow.

We want thee, child, to share in our delight
On this high day, the holiest and best,
Because 'twas then, ere youth had taken flight,
Thy grandmamma, of women loveliest,
Made me of men most honoured and most blest.

* Originally contributed by Mr. Lucas to Mr. C. L. Graves' *Hawarden Horace*, as a free rendering of one of the Odes, these verses, representing the late Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone as addressing his favourite little grand-daughter, Miss Dorothy Drew, have been frequently printed as the composition of the great statesman.

The naughty boy who led thee to suppose
He was thy sweetheart, has, I grieve to tell,
Been seen to pick the garden's choicest rose
And toddle with it to another belle,
Who does not treat him altogether well.

But mind not that, or let it teach thee this—
To waste no love on any youthful rover.
All youths are rovers, I assure thee, miss.
No, if thou wouldst true constancy discover,
Thy grandpapa is perfect as a lover.

So come, thou playmate of my closing day,
The latest treasure life can offer me,
And with thy baby laughter make us gay.
Thy fresh young voice shall sing, my Dorothy,
Songs that shall bid the feet of sorrow flee.

E. V. LUCAS.



LITTLE ELLA.

I KNOW not, little Ella, what the flowers
Said to you then, to make your cheeks so pale ;
And why the blackbird in our laurel bowers
Spoke to you, only : and the poor pink snail
Fear'd less your steps than those of the May-shower.
It was not strange those creatures loved you so,
And told you all. 'Twas not so long ago
You were, yourself, a bird, or else a flower.

And, little Ella, you were pale, because
So soon you were to die. I know that now—
And why there even seem'd a sort of gauze
Over your deep blue eyes, and sad young brow.
You were too good to grow up, Ella, you,
And be a woman such as I have known !
And so upon your heart they put a stone,
And left you, dear, amongst the flowers and dew.

O thou, the morning star of my dim soul !
My little elfin-friend from Fairy-Land !
Whose memory is yet innocent of the whole
Of that which makes me doubly need thy hand,
Thy guiding hand from mine too soon withdrawn !
Here where I find so little like to thee :
For thou wert as the breath of dawn to me,
Starry, and pure, and brief as is the dawn.

Thy knight was I, and thou my Fairy Queen,
('Twas in the days of love and chivalry !)
And thou didst hide thee in a bower of green.
But thou so well hast hidden thee, that I
Have never found thee since. And thou didst set
Many a task, and quest, and high emprise,
Ere I should win my guerdon from thine eyes,
So many, and so many, that not yet

My tasks are ended, nor my wanderings o'er.
But some day there will come across the main
A magic barque, and I shall quit this shore
Of care, and find thee in thy bower again ;
And thou wilt say, " My brother, hast thou found
Our home at last ? " . . . Whilst I, in answer, Sweet,
Shall heap my life's last booty at thy feet,
And bare my breast with many a bleeding wound.

The spoils of time ! the trophies of the world !
The keys of conquered towns, and captived kings,
And many a broken sword, and banner furl'd,
The heads of giants, and swart soldan's rings,
And many a maiden's scarf, and many a wand
Of baffled wizard, many an amulet,
And many a shield with mine own heart's blood wet,
And jewels rare from many a distant land !

How sweet, with thee, my sister, to renew,
In lands of light, the search for those bright birds
Of plumage so ethereal in its hue,
And music sweeter than all mortal words,
Which some good angel to our childhood sent
With messenger from Paradisal flowers,
So lately left, the scent of Eden bowers
Yet linger'd in our hair, where'er we went !

Now, they are all fled by, this many a year,
Adown the viewless valleys of the wind,
And never more will cross this hemisphere,
Those birds of passage ! Never shall I find,
Dropt from the flight you follow'd, dear, so far
That you will never come again, I know,
One plumelet on the paths whereby I go,
Throwing thy light there, O my morning star !

She pass'd out of my youth, at the still time
O' the early light, when all was green and husht.
She pass'd, and pass'd away. Some broken rhyme
Scrawl'd on the panel or the pane : the crusht
And faded rose she dropp'd ; the page she turn'd
And finish'd not ; the ribbon on the knot
That flutter'd from her . . . Stranger, harm them not !
I keep these sacred relics undiscern'd.

LORD LYTTON ("OWEN MEREDITH").

LITTLE WILLIE.

Poor little Willie,
With his many pretty wiles ;
Worlds of wisdom in his look,
And quaint, quiet smiles ;
Hair of amber, touch'd with
Gold of Heaven so brave ;
All lying darkly hid
In a workhouse grave.

You remember little Willie,
Fair and funny fellow ! he
Sprang like a lily
From the dirt of poverty.
Poor little Willie !
Not a friend was nigh,
When from the cold world
He crouch'd down to die.

In the day we wander'd foodless,
Little Willie cried for " bread ; "
In the night we wander'd homeless,
Little Willie cried for " bed."
Parted at the workhouse door,
Not a word we said ;
Ah ! so tired was poor Willie !
And so sweetly sleep the dead.

'Twas in the dead of winter
We laid him in the earth ;
The world brought in the new year
On a tide of mirth.

But for the lost little Willie
Not a tear we crave ;
Cold and hunger cannot wake him
In his workhouse grave.

We thought him beautiful,
Felt it hard to part ;
We loved him dutiful :
Down, down, poor heart !
The storms they may beat,
The winter winds may rave ;
Little Willie feels not
In his workhouse grave.

No room for little Willie ;
In the world he had no part ;
On him stared the Gorgon-eye
Through which looks no heart.
“ Come to me,” said Heaven ;
And if Heaven will save,
Little matters though the door
Be a workhouse grave.

GERALD MASSEY.



OUR WEE WHITE ROSE.

ALL in our marriage garden
Grew, smiling up to God,
A bonnier flower than ever
Suckt the green warmth of the sod.
O beautiful unfathomably
Its little life unfurl'd ;
Life's crowning sweetness was our wee
White Rose of all the world.

From out a gracious bosom
Our bud of beauty grew ;
It fed on smiles for sunshine,
And tears for daintier dew.
Aye nestling warm and tenderly,
Our leaves of love were curled
So close and close about our wee
White Rose of all the world.

Two flowers of glorious crimson
Grew with our Rose of Light ;
Still kept the sweet heaven-grafted slip
Her whiteness saintly white.
In the winds of life they danced with glee,
And reddened as it whirled ;
White, white and wondrous grew our wee
White Rose of all the world.

With mystical faint fragrance
Our house of life she filled—
Revealed each hour some fairy tower,
Where wingèd hope might build.
We saw—though none like us might see—
Such precious promise pearled
Upon the petals of our wee
White Rose of all the world.

But evermore the halo
Of angel-light increased ;
Like the mystery of moonlight,
That folds some fairy feast.
Snow-white, snow-soft, snow-silently,
Our darling bud up-curled,
And dropt in the Grave-God's lap—our wee
White Rose of all the world.

Our Rose was but in blossom !
Our life was but in spring ;
When down the solemn midnight
We heard the spirits sing :
“ Another bud of infancy,
With holy dews impearled ; ”
And in their hands they bore our wee
White Rose of all the world.

You scarce would think so small a thing
Could leave a loss so large ;
Her little light such shadow fling,
From dawn to sunset's marge.
In other springs our life may be
In bannered bloom unfurled ;
But never, never match our wee
White Rose of all the world.

GERALD MASSEY.



WITHIN A MILE.

WITHIN a mile of Edinburgh town
We laid our little darling down ;
Our first seed in God's acre sown !

So sweet a place ! Death looks beguiled
Of half his gloom ; or sure he smiled
To win our lovely, spirit child.

God giveth his beloved sleep
So calm, within its silence deep,
As angel-guards its watch did keep.

The City looketh solemn and sweet ;
It bares a gentle brow, to greet
The mourners mourning at its feet.

The sea of human life breaks round
This shore o' the dead, with softened sound :
Wild flowers climb each mossy mound

To place in resting hands their palm,
And breathe their beauty, bloom and balm ;
Folding the dead in fragrant calm.

A softer shadow Grief might wear :
And old Heartache come gather there
The peace that falleth after prayer.

Poor heart, that danced along the vines
All reeling-ripe with wild love-wines,
Thou walk'st with Death among the pines !

Lorn Mother, at the dark grave-door,
She kneeleth, pleading o'er and o'er ;
But it is shut for evermore.

She toileth on, the mournfull'st thing,
At the vain task of emptying
The cistern whence the salt tears spring.

Blind ! blind ! she feels, but cannot read
Aright ; then leans as she would feed
The dear dead lips that never heed.

The spirit of life may leap above,
But in that grave her prisoned dove
Lies, cold to the warm embrace of love,

And dark, tho' all the world be bright;
And lonely, with a City in sight;
And desolate in the rainy night.

Ah, God! when in the glad life-cup
The face of Death swims darkly up;
The crowning flower is sure to droop.

And so we laid our darling down,
When summer's cheek grew ripely brown,
And still, tho' grief hath milder grown,

Unto the Stranger's land we cleave,
Like some poor Birds that grieve and grieve,
Round the robbed nest, and cannot leave.

GERALD MASSEY.



PLEASE, IT'S ONLY ME.

I HAVE a little Curly-Head,
Who runs about all day
As if the world were made for him,
And he were made for play;
He's here, he's there, he's everywhere
With mimic spade and cart,
And oft I think my darling makes
A playroom of my heart.

He talks and acts as if my home
Were altogether his,
But I am quite content, and feel
A father's perfect bliss;

He points at pictures on the wall,
And then he says, "Dey's mine!"
And I say, "Yes, my darling boy,
Yes, all I have is thine."

If he is happy, so am I;
If he is sad with fears,
My foolish eyes at sight of his
Are quickly filled with tears;
I cannot understand at all,
My joy runs to the brim,
He lives his little life in mine,
And I live mine in him.

He has no sense of time nor place,
And that I often find,
For when I'm toiling at my desk
With eager, anxious mind,
His feet come patter up the stairs,
He knocks my door with glee,
And all he says when I reply,
Is, "Please, it's only me!"

That's all you have for your excuse,
You darling little mite!
And now your golden curls will hide
My papers out of sight;
But never mind, since you have found
And used that magic key,
Which opens both my door and heart
With "Please, it's only me."

And that is just what happens
When he comes in grief or joy,
We dance and sing together,
Or I mend his broken toy;

I cannot, cannot help it,
Nor would I if I could,
Be weary of his lovely faith
In my glad fatherhood.

Yes, let him come, he'll always see
A welcome in my face,
Although he come with weeping sore,
Or pain o'er some disgrace ;
And when my threshold he will cross,
And on life's travel start,
I know he'll take away the key
Of both my home and heart.

call myself his father,
But to God I am a child,
And at His door I often knock,
And oft with hand defiled ;
Yet still my soul will never find
With Him a stronger plea,
Than this, my little darling's prayer
Of " Please, it's only me."

Sometimes I knock with rapture,
And sometimes with broken toys,
And like myself, but better far,
He makes His child rejoice ;
And when I climb His unseen stairs,
I know whom I shall see,
If I but knock outside His door
With "*Please, it's only me.*"

WALTER J. MATHAMS.



MARTIN'S PUZZLE.

THERE she goes up the street, with her book in her hand,

And her Good morning, Martin ! Ay, lass, how d'ye do ?

Very well, thank you, Martin ! I can't understand !

I might just as well never have cobbled a shoe !

I can't understand it. She talks like a song ;

Her voice takes your ear like the ring of a glass ;

She seems to give gladness while limping along,

Yet sinner ne'er suffer'd like that little lass.

First, a fool of a boy ran her down with a cart.

Then, her fool of a father—a blacksmith by trade—

Why the deuce does he tell us it half broke his heart ?

His heart !—where's the leg of the poor little maid ?

Well, that's not enough ; they must push her down stairs,

To make her go crooked ; but why count the list ?

If it's right to suppose that our human affairs

Are all order'd by Heaven—there, bang goes my fist !

For if angels can look on such sights—never mind !

When you're next to blaspheming, it's best to be mum.

The parson declares that her woes weren't designed ;

But then, with the parson it's all kingdom-come.

Lose a leg, save a soul—a convenient text ;

I call it tea-doctrine, not savouring of God.

When poor little Molly wants chastening, why, next

The Archangel Michael might taste of the rod.

But, to see the poor darling go limping for miles
To read books to sick people !—and just of an age
When girls learn the meaning of ribands and smiles !
Makes me feel like a squirrel that turns in a cage.
The more I push thinking, the more I revolve :
I never get farther ;—and as to her face,
It starts up when near on my puzzle I solve,
And says, “This crush’d body seems such a sad
case.”

Not that she’s for complaining ; she reads to earn
pence ;
And from those who can’t pay, simple thanks are
enough.
Does she leave lamentation for chaps without sense ?
Howsoever, she’s made up of wonderful stuff.
Ay, the soul in her body must be a stout cord ;
She sings little hymns at the close of the day,
Though she has but three fingers to lift to the Lord,
And only one leg to kneel down with and pray.

What I ask is, why persecute such a poor dear,
If there’s Law above all ? Answer that if you can ?
Irreligious I’m not ; but I look on this sphere
As a place where a man should just think like a man.
It isn’t fair dealing ! But, contrariwise,
Do bullets in battle the wicked select ?
Why, then it’s all chance-work ! And yet, in her eyes,
She holds a fixed something by which I am checked.

Yonder riband of sunshine aslope on the wall,
If you eye it a minute ’ll have the same look ;
So kind, and so merciful ! God of us all !
It’s the very same lesson we get from the Book.

Then, is Life but a trial ? Is that what is meant ?

Some must toil, and some perish, for others below :
The injustice to each spreads a common content ;
Aye ! I've lost it again, for it can't be quite so.

She's the victim of fools : that seems near the mark.

On earth there are engines and numerous fools.
Why the Lord can permit them, we're still in the dark ;
He does, and in some sort of way they're his tools.
It's a roundabout way, with respect let me add,
If Molly goes crippled that we may be taught ;
But, perhaps it's the only way, though it's so bad ;
In that case we'll bow down our heads,—as we ought.

But the worst of *me* is, that when I bow my head,
I perceive a thought wriggling away in the dust,
And I follow its tracks, quite forgetful, instead
Of humble acceptance : for question I must !
Here's a creature made carefully—carefully made !
Put together with craft, and then stamped on, and
why ?

The answer seems nowhere : it's discord that's played.
The sky's a blue dish ! an implacable sky !

Stop a moment. I seize an idea from the pit.

They tell us that discord, though discord, alone,
Can be harmony when the notes properly fit :
Am I judging all things from a single false tone ?
Is the Universe one immense organ, that rolls
From devils to angels ? I'm blind with the sight.
It pours such a splendour on heaps of poor souls !
I might try at kneeling with Molly to-night.

GEORGE MEREDITH.



THE YOUNG USURPER.

ON my darling's bosom,
Has dropped a living rosebud,
Fair as brilliant Hesper
Against the brimming flood.
She handles him,
She dandles him,
She fondles him and eyes him :
And if upon a tear he wakes,
With many a kiss she dries him :
She covets every move he makes,
And never enough can prize him.
Ah, the young Usurper !
I yield my golden throne :
Such angel bands attend his hands
To claim it for his own.

GEORGE MEREDITH.



THE UNKNOWN TONGUE.

THAT baby, I knew her in days of old.
You doubt that I lived in a land made fair
With many soft moons, and was mated there ?
Now mark you ! I saw but to-day in the street
A "sweet girl-baby, whose delicate feet
As yet upon earth took but uncertain hold ;
Yet she carried a doll as she toddled alone,
And she talked to that doll in a tongue her own.
The sweet little stranger ! why, her face still bore
The look of the people from the far star-shore.

Ah ! you doubt me still ? then listen : While you
Have looked to the earth for gold, why I—
I have looked to the steeps of the starry sky.
And which, indeed, had the fairer view
Of the infinite things, the dreamer or you ? . . .
How blind be men when they will not see !
If men must look in the dust, or look
At best, with the eyes bound down to a book,
Why, who shall deny that it comes to me
To sail white ships through the ether sea ?

Yes, I am a dreamer. Yet, while you dream,
Then I am awake. When a child back through
The gates of the past I peered, and I knew
The land I had lived in. I saw the broad stream ;
Saw rainbows that compassed a world in their reach ;
I saw my beloved go down on the beach ;
Saw her lean to this earth, saw her looking for me
As shipmen look from their ships at sea. . . .
The sweet girl-baby ! Why, that unknown tongue
Is the tongue she has talked since the stars were young !

JOAQUIN MILLER.



HYMN ON THE NATIVITY.

It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born Child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies ;
Nature, in awe to Him,
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathise :
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
 To hide her guilty front with innocent snow :
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
 The saintly veil of maiden white to throw ;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

But He, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace :
 She, crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
 With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing ;
And, waving with her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around :
 The idle spear and shield were high up hung ;
The hookèd chariot stood
Unstain'd with hostile blood ;
 The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng ;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sov'reign Lord was by.

But peaceful was the night,
Wherein the Prince of Light
 His reign of peace upon the earth began ;
The winds, with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kiss'd,
 Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmèd wave.

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fix'd in steadfast gaze,

Bending one way their precious influence :
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,

Or Lucifer that often warn'd them thence ;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until the Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

And though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,

The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame

The new-enlighten'd world no more should need :
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne, or burning axletree, could bear.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or e'er the point of dawn,

Sat simply chatting in a rustic row :
Full little thought they then,
That the mighty Pan

Was kindly come to live with them below ;
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep,—

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet,

As never was by mortal finger strook ;
Divinely-warbled voice
Answering the stringèd noise,

As all their souls in blissful rapture took :
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

Nature, that heard such sound,
Beneath the hollow round

Of Cynthia's seat, the airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,

And that her reign had here its last fulfilling ;
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all heaven and earth in happier union.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,

That with long beams the shamefaced night array'd ;
The helmèd cherubim,
And sworded seraphim,

Are seen in glittering ranks with wings display'd,
Harping, in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born Heir.

Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,

But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,

And the well-balanced world on hinges hung ;
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears,

If ye have power to touch our senses so ;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time ;

And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow ;
And, with your ninefold harmony,
Make up full concert to the angelic symphony.

For, if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back and fetch the age of gold ;
And speckled vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
And leprous sin will melt from earthly mould ;
And hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

Yea, truth and justice then
Will down return to men,
Orb'd in a rainbow ; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering ;
And heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

But wisest Fate says No,
This must not yet be so ;
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy,
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss,
So both Himself and us to glorify :
Yet first, to those ychain'd in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the
deep ;

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang,
While the red fire and smouldering clouds out-brake ;
The aged earth, aghast
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the centre shake ;

When, at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread His
throne.

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins ; for, from this happy day,
The old Dragon, under ground
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway ;
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

The oracles are dumb,
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathèd spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament ;
From haunted spring and dale,
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting genius is with sighing sent ;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn,
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint ;

In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
 Affrights the Flamens at their service quaint ;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power foregoes his wonted seat.

Peor and Baälim
Forsake their temples dim,
 With that twice-batter'd god of Palestine ;
And moonèd Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both,
 Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine ;
The Lybic Hammon shrinks his horn,
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz
 mourn.

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
 His burning idol all of blackest hue ;
In vain, with cymbals' ring,
They call the grisly king,
 In dismal dance about the furnace blue ;
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
 Trampling the unshower'd grass with lowings loud :
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest ;
 None but profoundest hell can be his shroud ;
In vain, with timbrell'd anthems dark,
The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his worshipp'd ark.

He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand,
 The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn ;
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
 Nor Typhon huge ending in snaky twine ;
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damnèd crew.

So, when the sun in bed,
Curtain'd with cloudy red,
 Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
'Troop to the infernal jail,
 Each fetter'd ghost slips to his several grave ;
And the yellow-skirted fays
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved
 maze.

But see, the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest ;
 Time is, our tedious song should here have ending :
Heaven's youngest-teem'd star
Hath fix'd her polish'd car,
 Her sleeping Lord, with handmaid lamp, attending :
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harness'd angels sit in order serviceable.

JOHN MILTON.



AT CHAMBERS.

To the chamber, where now uncaring
I sit apart from the strife,
While the fool and the knave are sharing,
The pleasures and profits of life,

There came a faint knock at the door,
Not long since on a terrible day ;
One faint little knock, and no more ;
And I brushed the loose papers away.

And as no one made answer, I rose,
With quick step and impatience of look,
And a glance of the eye which froze,
And a ready voice of rebuke.

But when the door opened, behold !
A mother, low-voiced and mild,
Whose thin shawl and weak arms enfold
A pale little two-year-old child.

What brought her there ? Would I relieve her ?
Was all the poor mother could say :
For her child, scarce recovered from fever,
Left the hospital only that day.

Pale indeed was the child, yet so cheerful,
That, seeing me wonder, she said,
Of doubt and repulse grown fearful,
“ Please look at his dear little head ; ”

And snatched off the little bonnet,
And so in a moment laid bare
A shorn little head, and upon it
No trace of the newly-come hair.

When, seeing the stranger's eye
Grow soft, with an innocent guile
The child looked up, shrinking and shy,
With the ghost of a baby smile.

Poor child ! I thought, so soon come
To the knowledge of lives oppressed,
To whom poverty comes with home,
And sickness brings food and rest :

Who are launched forth, a frail little boat,
In the midst of life's turbulent sea,
To be sunk, it may be, or to float
On great waves that care nothing for thee.

What awaits thee ? An early peace
In the depth of a little grave,
Or, despite all thy ills, to increase,
Through some dark chance, mighty to save ;

Till in stalwart manhood you meet
The strong man, who regards you to-day,
Crawling slowly along the street,
In old age withered and grey ?

Who knows ? But the thoughts I have told
In one instant flashed through my brain,
As the poor mother, careful of cold,
Clasped her infant to her again.

And I, if I searched for my purse,
Was I selfish, say you, and wrong ?
Surely silver is wasted worse
Than in earning a right to a song.

SIR LEWIS MORRIS.

GOD'S CHILD.

He wanders round the garden wild,
I hear him singing sweet ;
I know it is my fairy child,
I hear his dancing feet.

Birds low warble in the nest,
Leaves murmur merrily ;
My boy is leaning on the breast
Of God most tranquilly.

He gazes in deep eyes Divine,
With innocent clear eyes ;
He is God's baby more than mine,
The Father is all-wise.

Carol, my darling ! laugh and leap !
For art thou not God's own ?
. . . Ah ! wildly, wildly must I weep . . .
. . . God hath destroyed His son !

Stabbed with a sudden traitor thrust
The heart so unafraid !
Then flung him down into the dust,
To perish on the blade !

Earth felt, and, staggered with the blow,
Reeled shuddering under me !
Dead worlds, like shrivelled leaves, fell low
From Life's uprooted tree !

How shall I name Thee, Thou Supreme?
Hate, Treachery, or Crime?
. . . When may we rise from our dark dream
Beyond the bounds of Time?

He is but folded closer still
Within the Father's bosom,
Lest our earth airs may work him ill,
My baby boy, my blossom!

HON. RODEN NOEL.



THE TOY CROSS.

MY little boy at Christmas-tide
Made me a toy cross ;
Two sticks he did, in boyish pride,
With brazen nail emboss.

Ah me ! how soon, on either side
His dying-bed's true cross,
She and I were crucified,
Bemoaning our life-loss.

But He, Whose arms in death spread wide
Upon the holy tree,
Were clasped about him when he died—
Clasped for eternity !

HON. RODEN NOEL.



GEORGE AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER.

His petticoats now George cast off,
For he was four years old ;
His trousers were nankeen so fine,
His buttons bright as gold.
“ May I,” said little George, “ go out,
My pretty clothes to show ?
May I, papa ? may I, mamma ? ”
The answer was—“ No, no.”

“ Go run below, George, in the court,
But go not in the street,
Lest naughty boys should play some trick,
Or gipsies you should meet.”
Yet tho’ forbade, George went unseen
That other boys might spy ;
And all admir’d him when he lisp’d—
“ Now who so fine as I ? ”

But whilst he strutted to and fro,
So proud, as I’ve heard tell,
A sweep-boy pass’d, whom to avoid
He slipp’d, and down he fell.
The sooty lad was kind and good,
To Georgy boy he ran,
He rais’d him up, and kissing, said,
“ Hush, hush, my little man ! ”

He rubb’d and wip’d his clothes with care,
And hugging said, “ Don’t cry !—
Go home, as quick as you can go ;
Sweet little boy, good-bye.”

Poor George look'd down, and lo ! his dress
Was blacker than before ;
All over soot, and mud, and dirt,
He reach'd his father's door.

He sobb'd, and wept, and look'd asham'd,
His fault he did not hide ;
And since so sorry for his fault,
Mamma forbade to chide.
That night when he was gone to bed,
He jump'd up in his sleep,
And cried and sobb'd, and cried again,
"I thought I saw the sweep !"

ADELAIDE O'KEEFFE.



THE ORPHAN BOY.

STAY, lady, stay, for mercy sake,
And hear a helpless orphan's tale !
Ah, sure my looks must pity wake,
'Tis want that makes my cheek so pale.
Yet I was once a mother's pride,
And my brave father's hope and joy ;
But in the Nile's proud fight he died,
And I am now an Orphan Boy.

Poor foolish child ! how pleased was I,
When news of Nelson's victory came,
Along the crowded streets to fly,
And see the lighted windows flame !

To force me home my mother sought :
She could not bear to see my joy ;
For with my father's life 'twas bought,
And made me a poor Orphan Boy.

The people's shouts were long and loud,—
My mother shuddering closed her ears :
"Rejoice ! rejoice !" still cried the crowd,—
My mother answered with her tears.
"Oh, why do tears steal down your cheek,"
Cried I, "while others shout for joy ?"
She kissed me, and in accents weak,
She called me her poor Orphan Boy.

"What is an Orphan Boy ?" I said,—
When suddenly she gasped her breath,
And her eyes closed. I shrieked for aid ;
But ah, her eyes were closed in death !
My hardships since I will not tell ;
But, now, no more a parent's joy,
Ah, lady ! I have learned too well
What 'tis to be an Orphan Boy !

Oh, were I by your bounty fed !—
Nay, gentle lady ! do not chide ;
Trust me, I mean to earn my bread,—
The sailor's Orphan Boy has pride.
Lady, you weep ! What is't you say !
You'll give me clothing, food, employ ?—
Look down, dear parents, look and see
Your happy, happy Orphan Boy !

MRS. AMELIA OPTIE.



TO A CHILD.

IF by any device or knowledge
The rose-bud its beauty could know,
It would stay a rose-bud for ever,
Nor into its fulness grow.

And if thou could'st know thy own sweetness,
O little one, perfect and sweet,
Thou would'st be a child for ever,
Completer while incomplete.

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE.



MY LITTLE ADA.

My little darling Ada,
Her father's joy and pride,
To smother me with kisses
She toddles to my side.
Her prattle charms and cheers me,
How sad soe'er I be,
And the sparkle of her merry eye
Like sunlight is to me.

Her horse is in the window,
Her doll is on the chair,
Those little wooden bricks of hers
Are littered everywhere.
I love these mute reminders
Of child-land and its joy,
Memorials of the Paradise
I dwelt in when a boy.

And often, when she's sleeping,
With dimpled arms outspread,
On hushing tiptoe creeping,
I steal beside her bed ;
And kissing, pray Heaven guard her,
Life's rugged journey through,
That so papa's dear Ada
May be God's Ada, too.

S. W. PARTRIDGE.



MARGARET LOVE PEACOCK.

THREE YEARS OLD. *

LONG night succeeds thy little day,
O, blighted blossom ! can it be
That this grey stone and grassy clay
Have closed our anxious care of thee ?

The half-form'd speech of artless thought,
That spoke a mind beyond thy years,
The song—the dance by Nature taught,
The sunny smiles, the transient tears.

The symmetry of face and form,
The eye with light and life replete,
The little heart so fondly warm,
The voice so musically sweet.

There, lost to hope, in memory yet
Around the hearts that loved thee cling,
Shadowing with long and vain regret
The too fair promise of thy Spring.

THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.

MY LITTLE GIRL.

My little girl is nested
Within her tiny bed,
With amber ringlets crested
Around her dainty head ;
She lies so calm and stilly,
She breathes so soft and low,
She calls to mind a lily
Half hidden in the snow.

A weary little mortal
Has gone to slumberland :
The Pixies at the portal
Have caught her by the hand ;
She dreams her broken dolly
Will soon be mended there,
That looks so melancholy
Upon the rocking-chair.

I kiss your wayward tresses,
My drowsy little queen ;
I know you have caresses
From floating forms unseen ;
O, angels, let me keep her
To kiss away my cares,
This darling little sleeper
Who has my love and prayers.

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.



QUESTIONS OF THE HOUR.

- “ Do angels wear white dresses, say ?
 Always, or only in the summer ? Do
 Their birthdays have to come like mine, in May ?
 Do they have scarlet sashes then, or blue ?
- “ When little Jessie died last night,
 How could she walk to Heaven—it is so far ?
 How did she find the way without a light ?
 There wasn't even any moon or star.
- “ Will she have red or golden wings ?
 Then will she have to be a bird, and fly ?
 Do they take men like presidents and kings
 In hearses with black plumes clear to the sky ?
- “ How old is God ? Has He grey hair ?
 Can He see yet ? Where did He have to stay
 Before—you know—He had made—Anywhere ?
 Who does He pray to—when He has to pray ?
- “ How many drops are in the sea ?
 How many stars ?—well, then, you ought to know
 How many flowers are on an apple tree ?
 How does the wind look when it doesn't blow ?
- “ Where does the rainbow end ? And why
 Did—Captain Kidd—bury the gold there ? When
 Will this world burn ? And will the firemen try
 To put the fire out with the engines then ?

“ If you should ever die, may we
Have pumpkins growing in the garden, so
My fairy godmother can come for me
When there's a Prince's ball, and let me go?

“ Read Cinderella just once more—
What makes—men's other wives—so mean? ” I
know
That I was tired, it may be cross, before
I shut the printed book for her to go.

Hours later, from a child's white bed
I heard the timid, last queer question start :
“ Mamma, are you—my stepmother? ” it said.
The innocent reproof crept to my heart.

MRS. S. M. B. PLATT.



LAST WORDS

OVER A LITTLE BED AT NIGHT.

GOOD NIGHT, pretty sleepers of mine—
I never shall see you again :
Ah, never in shadow or shine ;
Ah, never in dew or in rain.

In your small dreaming-dresses of white,
With the wild-bloom you gathered to-day
In your quiet shut hands, from the light
And the dark you will wander away.

Though no graves in the bee-haunted grass,
And no love in the beautiful sky
Shall take you as yet, you will pass,
With this kiss, through these tear-drops. Good-bye !

With less gold and more bloom in their hair,
When the buds near have faded to flowers,
Three faces may wake here as fair—
But older than yours are, by hours !

Good-night, then, lost darlings of mine—
I never shall see you again ;
Ah, never in shadow or shine :
Ah, never in dew or in rain.

MRS. S. M. B. PIATT.



TO MARIAN ASLEEP.

THE full moon glimmers still and white,
Where yon shadowy clouds unfold ;
The stars, like children of the night,
Lie with their little heads of gold
On her dark lap : nor less divine
And brighter seems your own on mine.

My darling, with your snowy sleep
Folded around your dimpled form,
Your little breathings calm and deep,
Your mother's arms and heart are warm ;
You wear as lilies in your breast
The dreams that blossom from your rest.

Ah, must your clear eyes see ere long
The mist and wreck on sea and land,
And that old haunter of all song,
The mirage hiding in the sand?
And with the dead leaves in the frost
Tell you of song and summer lost?

And shall you hear the ghastly tales
From the slow, solemn lips of Time—
Of Wrong that wins, of Right that fails,
Of trampled Want and gorgeous Crime,
Of Splendour's glare in lighted rooms,
And Famine's moan in outer glooms?

Of armies in their red eclipse
That mingle on the smoking plain;
Of storms that dash our mighty ships
With silks and spices through the main;
Of what it costs to climb or fall—
Of Death's great Shadow, ending all?

But, baby Marian, do I string
The dusk with darker rhymes for you,
Forgetting that you came in Spring,
The child of sun and bloom and dew,
And that I kissed, still fresh to-day,
The rosiest bud of last year's May?

Forgive me, pretty one: I know,
Whatever sufferings onward lie,
Christ wore his crown of thorns below
To gain his crown of light on high;
And when the lamp's frail flame is gone,
Look up! the stars will still shine on.

Mrs. S. M. B. PLATT.

MY CHILD.

I CANNOT make him dead !
His fair sunshiny head
Is ever bounding round my study chair ;
Yet when my eyes, now dim
With tears, I turn to him,
The vision vanishes—he is not there !

I walk my parlour floor,
And through the open door
I hear a footfall on the chamber stair ;
I'm stepping toward the hall
To give the boy a call,
And then bethink me that he is not there !

I tread the crowded street :
A satchelled lad I meet,
With the same beaming eyes and coloured hair ;
And, as he's running by,
Follow him with my eye,
Scarcely believing that he is not there !

I know his face is hid
Under the coffin lid,
Closed are his eyes ; cold is his forehead fair ;
My hand that marble felt,
O'er it in prayer I knelt ;
Yet my heart whispers that he is not there !

I cannot make him dead !
When passing by the bed,
So long watched o'er with paternal care,
My spirit and my eye
Seek it inquiringly,
Before the thought comes that he is not there !

When, at the cool grey break
Of day, from sleep I wake,
With my first breathing of the morning air
My soul goes up with joy
To Him who gave my boy ;
Then comes the sad thought that he is not there !

When, at the day's calm close,
Before we seek repose,
I'm with his mother, offering up our prayer,
Whate'er I may be saying,
I am, in spirit, praying
For our boy's spirit, though he is not there !

Not there ! Where, then, is he ?
The form I used to see
Was but the raiment that he used to wear.
The grave, that now doth press
Upon that cast-off dress,
Is but his wardrobe locked—he is not there !

He lives ! In all the past
He lives ; nor, to the last,
Of seeing him again will I despair :
In dream I see him now ;
And, on his angel brow,
It see it written, " Thou shalt see me there ! "

Yes, we all live to God !
Father, Thy chastening rod
So help us, Thine afflicted ones, to bear,
That in the spirit-land,
Meeting at Thy right hand,
'Twill be our heaven to find that he is there !

JOHN PIERPONT.

SKETCH OF A YOUNG LADY,

FIVE MONTHS OLD.

My pretty, budding, breathing flower,
Methinks, if I to-morrow
Could manage, just for half-an-hour,
Sir Joshua's brush to borrow,
I might immortalise a few
Of all the myriad graces
Which Time, while yet they all are new,
With newer still replaces.

I'd paint, my child, your deep blue eyes,
Their quick and earnest flashes ;
I'd paint the fringe that round them lies,
The fringe of long dark lashes ;
I'd draw with most fastidious care
One eyebrow, then the other,
And that fair forehead, broad and fair,
The forehead of your mother.

I'd oft retouch the dimpled cheek
Where health in sunshine dances ;
And oft the pouting lips, where speak
A thousand voiceless fancies ;
And the soft neck would keep me long,
The neck, more smooth and snowy
Than ever yet in schoolboy's song
Had Caroline or Chloe.

Nor less on those twin rounded arms
My new-found skill would linger,
Nor less upon the rosy charms
Of every tiny finger,

Nor slight the small feet, little one,
So prematurely clever
That, though they neither walk nor run,
I think they'd jump for ever.

But then your odd endearing ways—
What study e'er could catch them?
Your aimless gestures, endless plays—
What canvas e'er could match them?
Your lively leap of merriment,
Your murmur of petition,
Your serious silence of content,
Your laugh of recognition.

Here were a puzzling toil, indeed,
For Art's most fine creations !—
Grow on, sweet baby ; we will need
To note your transformations.
No picture of your form or face,
Your waking or your sleeping,
But that which Love shall daily trace,
And trust to Memory's keeping.

Hereafter, when revolving years
Have made you tall and twenty,
And brought you blended hopes and fears,
And sighs and slaves in plenty,
May those who watch our little saint
Among her tasks and duties,
Feel all her virtues hard to paint,
As now we deem her beauties.

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED.



CHILDHOOD AND HIS VISITORS.

ONCE on a time, when sunny May
Was kissing up the April showers,
I saw fair Childhood hard at play
Upon a bank of blushing flowers :
Happy—he knew not whence or how,—
And smiling,—who could choose but love him?
For not more glad than Childhood's brow,
Was the blue heaven that beam'd above him.

Old Time, in most appalling wrath,
That valley's green repose invaded ;
The brooks grew dry upon his path,
The birds were mute, the lilies faded.
But Time so swiftly wing'd his flight,
In haste a Grecian tomb to batter,
That Childhood watch'd his paper kite,
And knew just nothing of the matter.

With curling lip and glancing eye
Guilt gazed upon the scene a minute ;
But Childhood's glance of purity
Had such a holy spell within it,
That the dark demon to the air
Spread forth again his baffled pinion,
And hid his envy and despair,
Self-tortured, in his own dominion.

Then stepp'd a gloomy phantom up,
Pale, cypress-crown'd, Night's awful daughter,
And proffer'd him a fearful cup
Full to the brim of bitter water :

Poor Childhood bade her tell her name ;
And when the beldame mutter'd—"Sorrow,"
He said,—“Don't interrupt my game ;
I'll taste it, if I must, to-morrow.”

The Muse of Pindus thither came,
And woo'd him with the softest numbers
That ever scatter'd wealth and fame
Upon a youthful poet's slumbers ;
Though sweet the music of the lay,
To Childhood it was all a riddle,
And “Oh,” he cried, “do send away
That noisy woman with the fiddle !”

Then Wisdom stole his bat and ball,
And taught him, with most sage endeavour,
Why bubbles rise and acorns fall,
And why no toy may last for ever.
She talk'd of all the wondrous laws
Which Nature's open book discloses,
And Childhood, ere she made a pause,
Was fast asleep among the roses.

Sleep on, sleep on ! Oh ! Manhood's dreams
Are all of earthly pain or pleasure,
Of Glory's toils, Ambition's schemes,
Of cherish'd love, or hoarded treasure :
But to the couch where Childhood lies
A more delicious trance is given,
Lit up by rays from seraph eyes,
And glimpses of remember'd Heaven !

WINTHROP MACKWORTH PRAED.



TO A CHILD OF QUALITY FIVE YEARS
OLD.

THE AUTHOR THEN FORTY.

LORDS, knights, and squires, the numerous band
That wear the fair Miss Mary's fetters,
Were summoned by her high command,
To show their passions by their letters.

My pen amongst the rest I took,
Lest those bright eyes that cannot read
Should dart their kindling fires, and look
The power they have to be obey'd.

Nor quality nor reputation
Forbids me yet my flame to tell,
Dear five-year-old befriends my passion,
And I may write till she can spell.

For while she makes her silkworms' beds
With all the tender things I swear ;
Whilst all the house my passion reads
In papers round her baby's hair ;

She may receive and own my flame,
For, though the strictest prudes should know it,
She'll pass for a most virtuous dame,
And I for an unhappy poet.

Then, too, alas ! when she shall tear
The rhymes some younger rival sends ;
She'll give me leave to write, I fear,
And we shall still continue friends.

For, as our different ages move,
'Tis so ordained (would Fate but mend it !)
That I shall be past making love
When she begins to comprehend it.

MATTHEW PRIOR.



CRADLE SONG OF THE POOR.

HUSH ! I cannot bear to see thee
Stretch thy tiny hands in vain ;
Dear, I have no bread to give thee ;
Nothing, child, to ease thy pain !
When God sent thee first to bless me,
Proud, and thankful too, was I ;
Now, my darling, I, thy mother,
Almost long to see thee die.
Sleep, my darling, thou art weary ;
God is good, but life is dreary.

I have watched thy beauty fading,
And thy strength sink day by day ;
Soon, I know, will Want and Fever
Take thy little life away.
Famine makes thy father reckless,
Hope has left both him and me ;
We could suffer all, my baby,
Had we but a crust for thee.
Sleep, my darling, thou art weary ;
God is good, but life is dreary.

Better thou should'st perish early,
Starve so soon, my darling one,
Than in helpless sin and sorrow
Vainly live, as I have done.
Better that thy angel spirit
With my joy, my peace, were flown,
Than thy heart grow cold and careless,
Reckless, hopeless, like my own.
Sleep, my darling, thou art weary ;
God is good, but life is dreary.

I am wasted, dear, with hunger,
And my brain is all opprest,
I have scarcely strength to press thee,
Wan and feeble, to my breast.
Patience, baby, God will help us,
Death will come to thee and me ;
He will take us to his Heaven,
Where no want or pain can be.
Sleep, my darling, thou art weary ;
God is good, but life is dreary.

Such the plaint that, late and early,
Did we listen, we might hear
Close beside us—but the thunder
Of a city dulls our ear.
Every heart, as God's bright angel,
Can bid one such sorrow cease ;
God has glory when His children
Bring his poor ones joy and peace !
Listen, nearer while she sings
Sounds the fluttering of wings !

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

GOD'S GIFTS.

God gave a gift to Earth : a child,
Weak, innocent and undefiled,
Opened its ignorant eyes and smiled.

It lay so helpless, so forlorn,
Earth took it coldly and in scorn,
Cursing the day when it was born.

She gave it first a tarnished name,
For heritage, a tainted fame,
Then cradled it in want and shame.

All influence of Good or Right,
All ray of God's most holy light,
She curtained closely from its sight.

Then turned her heart, her eyes away,
Ready to look again, the day
Its little feet began to stray.

In dens of guilt the baby played,
Where sin, and sin alone, was made
The law that all around obeyed.

With ready and obedient care
He learnt the tasks they taught him there ;
Black sin for lesson—oaths for prayer.

The earth arose, and, in her might,
To vindicate her injured right,
Thrust him in deeper depths of night.

Branding him with a deeper brand
Of shame, he could not understand—
The felon outcast of the land.

God gave a gift to Earth : a child,
Weak, innocent, and undefiled,
Opened its ignorant eyes and smiled.

And Earth received the gift, and cried
Her joy and triumph far and wide,
Till echo answered to her pride.

She blest the hour when first he came
To take the crown of pride and fame,
Wreathed through long ages for his name ;

Then bent her utmost art and skill
To train the supple mind and will,
And guard it from a breath of ill.

She strewed his morning path with flowers,
And Love, in tender drooping showers,
Nourished the blue and dawning hours.

She shed, in rainbow hues of light,
A halo round the Good and Right,
To tempt and charm the baby's sight.

And every step, of work or play,
Was lit by some such dazzling ray,
Till morning brightened into day.

And then the World arose, and said—
Let added honours now be shed
On such a noble heart and head.

O World, both gifts were pure and bright,
Holy and sacred in God's sight—
God will judge them and thee aright !

ADELAIDE ANNE PROCTER.

GOLDEN-TRESSED ADELAIDE.

SING, I pray, a little song,
Mother dear !
Neither sad nor very long :
It is for a little maid,
Golden-tressed Adelaide !
Therefore let it suit a merry, merry ear,
Mother dear !

Let it be a merry strain,
Mother dear !
Shunning e'en the thought of pain :
For our gentle child will weep,
If the theme be dark and deep ;
And *we* will not draw a single tear,
Mother dear !

Childhood shall be all divine,
Mother dear !
And like endless summer shine :
Gay as Edward's shouts and cries,
Bright as Agnes' azure eyes ;
Therefore let thy song be merry ; dost thou hear,
Mother dear ?

BRYAN WALLER PROCTER.



BABY.

O WHEN did Baby come ?
When half the world was dumb,
Babe was dressed in white,
In the black, dead night.

O Baby came from where ?
That place is very fair ;
The middle of the skies,
The heart of Paradise.

O who sent Baby here ?
It was an angel dear,
A spirit of purple flame ;
Love is that angel's name.

O who was Baby's shield
Down from the heavenly field
Along the pathway dim ?
— One of the cherubim ;
His sword he took with him.

His golden head he bowed
To cleave the hindering cloud :
A seraph shone behind
Singing through the wind.

Singing and shining thus,
They brought the gift to us,
And in the dead of night,
The child was wrapt in white.

O God—who art the Lord
Of the cherub and the sword,
And the seraph with the lamp—
Let both of them encamp.

Beside the hushing tent
Of the creature that is sent
From the middle of Thy sky—
To guard, to beautify ;

To make the inaudible breath
More terrible than Death,
And light the unconscious face
As from a heavenly place
With the wonder of Thy ways !

O, why are your beautiful eyes so red,
Fair Lady ?
They have taken my baby out of my bed,
My Baby !

Speak sooth, your babe has gone up to God,
Fair Lady.
His little feet, little feet were not shod,
My Baby.

But the road that leads to the heavenly town
Is all over clouds as soft as down,
Fair Lady.
The way of the clouds is long and dim,
I would I were there to carry him,
My Baby.

He will be holpen by cherubs bright,
A fair new star for a lamp they light,
Sweet Lady !
The way to the heavenly town is long,
I would I could sing him a cradle song,
My Baby.
Our Lord stands waiting at heaven's door,
And Mary Mother runs on before,
Sweet Lady.

O he will feel strange in the heavenly street,
My Baby.
But the happy Innocents he will meet,
Fair Lady.

For the comely food he will cry, and gays,
My Baby.
They make him a feast in the heavenly place,
Our Lord will be there to speak the grace,
And Mary Mother, with godly gays,
Fair Lady.

The heavenly town will grow so dear,
He will forget his mother here,
My Baby.
He shall think of his mother in all the cheer,
He shall not forget in a thousand year,
Fair Lady.

W. B. RANDS.



GRANDPAPA'S SPECTACLES.

Oh, mother, what will grandpa do?
He's gone away to Heaven
Without the silver spectacles
That Uncle John had given;
How can he read the papers there,
Or find his hickory staff?
He'll put his coat on wrong side out,
And make the people laugh.

And when he takes the Bible down
And wipes the dusty lid,
He'll never find his spectacles
Within its cover hid ;
There won't be any little girl
He likes as well as me,
To run and hunt them up for him
And put them on his knee.

Oh dear ! he'll never find the place
About " the wicked flee,"
And how the bears ate children up
(That used to frighten me) ;
So, mother, if you'll dress me up
Just like an angel bright,
I'll fix our ladder 'gainst the sky
And take them up to-night.

MRS. M. L. RAYNE.



THE CHILDREN.

Do you love me, little children ?
O sweet blossoms that are curled
(Life's tender morning glories)
'Round the casement of the world !
Do your hearts climb up toward me,
As my own heart bends to you,
In the beauty of your dawning
And the brightness of your dew ?

When the fragrance of your faces
And the rhythm of your feet,
And the incense of your voices
Transform the sullen street,

Do you see my soul move softly
Forever when you move,
With an eye of benediction
And a guarding hand of love ?

O my darlings ! I am with you
In your trouble, in your play,
In your sobbing and your singing,
In your dark and in your day,
In the chambers where you nestle,
In the hovels where you lie,
In the sunlight where you blossom,
And the blackness where you die.

Not a blessing broods above you
But it lifts me from the ground ;
Not a thistle-barb doth sting you
But I suffer from the wound ;
And a cord within me trembles
To your lightest touch or tone,
And I famish when you hunger,
And I shiver when you moan.

.

I have trodden all the spaces
Of my solemn years alone,
And have never felt the cooing
Of a babe's breath near my own,
But with more than father passion,
And with more than mother pain,
I have loved you, little children :
Do you love me back again ?

RICHARD REALF.

LITTLE JOHN BOTTLEJOHN.

LITTLE John Bottlejohn lived on the hill,
And a blythe little man was he ;
And he won the heart of a little mermaid
Who lived in the deep blue sea.
And every evening she used to sit
And sing on the rocks by the sea—
“ O little John Bottlejohn, pretty John Bottlejohn,
Won't you come out to me ? ”

Little John Bottlejohn heard her sing,
And he opened his little door ;
And he hopped and he skipped, and he skipped and he
hopped,
Until he came down to the shore.
And there, on a rock, sat the little mermaid,
And still she was singing so free—
“ O little John Bottlejohn, pretty John Bottlejohn,
Won't you come out to me ? ”

Little John Bottlejohn made a bow,
And the mermaid she made one too ;
And she said—“ Oh, I never saw anything half
So perfectly sweet as you.
In my beautiful home 'neath the ocean foam
How happy we both should be !
O little John Bottlejohn, pretty John Bottlejohn,
Won't you come down with me ? ”

Little John Bottlejohn said—“ Oh, yes,
I'll willingly go with you ;
And I never will quail at the sight of your tail,
For perhaps I may grow one too.”

So he took her hand, and he left the land,
And he plunged in the foaming main,
And little John Bottlejohn, pretty John Bottlejohn,
Never was seen again.

LAURA E. RICHARDS.



LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE.

LITTLE Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay
An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' brush the crumbs
away,
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth
an' sweep,
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her
board an' keep;
An' all us other children, when the supper things is
done,
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A-list'nin' to the witch tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the gobble-uns 'at gits you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

Onc't they was a little boy wouldn't say his pray'rs—
An' when he went to bed at night, away up stairs,
His mamma heerd him holler, an' his daddy heerd him
bawl,
An' when they turn'd the kivvers down, he wasn't
there at all!

An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole,
an' press,
An' seeked him up the chimbly-flue, an' ever'-wheres, I
guess,
But all they ever found was thist his pants an' round-
about !—

An' the gobble-uns 'll get you

Ef you

Don't

Watch

Out !

An' one time a little girl 'ud always laugh an' grin,
An' make fun of ever'one an' all her blood-an'-kin,
An' onc't when they was "company," an' ole folks was
there,

She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, and said she didn't
care !

An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an'
hide,

They was two great big Black Things a-standin' by her
side.

An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she
know'd what she's about !

An' the gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you

Don't

Watch

Out !

An' Little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,
An' the lampwick splutters, an' the wind goes woo-oo !
An' you hear the crickets quiet, an' the moon is gray,
An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is squenched away,—

You better mind your parents, an' yer teachers fond an'
dear,
An' churish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's
tear,
An' help the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
Er the gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out !

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.



THE LOST KISS.

I PUT by the half-written poem,
While the pen, idly trailed in my hand,
Writes on—"Had I words to complete it,
Who'd read it, or who'd understand?"
But the little bare feet on the stairway,
And the faint, smothered laugh in the hall,
And the eerie-low lisp in the silence,
Cry up to me over it all.

So I gather it up—where was broken
The tear-faded thread of my theme,
Telling how, as one night I sat writing,
A fairy broke in on my dream ;
A little inquisitive fairy—
My own little girl, with the gold
Of the sun in her hair, and the dewy
Blue eyes of the fairies of old.

'Twas the dear little girl that I scolded—
 “ For was it a moment like this,”
I said, “ when she knew I was busy,
 To come romping in for a kiss?—
Come rowdying up from her mother,
 And clamoring there at my knee
For ‘ One ’ittle kiss for my dolly,
 And one ’ittle uzzer for me ! ’ ”

God pity the heart that repelled her,
 And the cold hand that turned her away !
And take, from the lips that denied her,
 This answerless prayer of to-day !
Take, Lord, from my mem’ry forever
 That pitiful sob of despair,
And the patter and trip of the little bare feet,
 And the one piercing cry on the stair !

I put by the half-written poem,
 While the pen, idly trailed in my hand,
Writes on—“ Had I words to complete it,
 Who’d read it, or who’d understand ? ”
But the bare little feet on the stairway,
 And the faint, smothered laugh in the hall,
And the eerie-low lisp in the silence,
 Cry up to me over it all.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.



THE FUNNY LITTLE FELLOW.

'Twas a funny little Fellow
Of the very purest type,
For he had a heart as mellow
As an apple over-ripe ;
And the brightest little twinkle
When a funny thing occurred,
And the lightest little tinkle
Of a laugh you ever heard.

His smile was like the glitter
Of the sun in tropic lands,
And his talk a sweeter twitter
Than the swallow understands ;
Hear him sing—and tell a story—
Snap a joke—ignite a pun—
'Twas a capture—rapture—glory,
And explosion—all in one !

Though he hadn't any money—
That condiment which tends
To make a fellow "honey"
To the palate of his friends—
Sweet simples he compounded—
Sovereign antidotes for sin
Or taint—a faith unbounded
That his friends were genuine.

He wasn't honoured, may be—
For his songs of praise were slim—
Yet I never knew a baby
That wouldn't crow for him ;

I never knew a mother
But urged a kindly claim
Upon him as a brother
At the mention of his name.

The sick have ceased their sighing,
And have even found the grace
Of a smile when they were dying,
As they looked upon his face ;
And I've seen his eyes of laughter
Melt in tears that only ran
As tho', swift-dancing after,
Came the Funny Little Man.

He laughed away the sorrow,
And he laughed away the doom
We are all so prone to borrow
From the darkness of the tomb ;
And he laughed across the ocean
Of a happy life, and passed,
With a laugh of glad emotion,
Into Paradise at last.

And I think the angels knew him,
And had gathered to await
His coming, and run to him
Through the widely-opened gate ;
With their faces gleaming sunny
For his laughter-loving sake,
And thinking, " What a funny
Little angel he will make ! "

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.



LITTLE MAID-O'-DREAMS.

LITTLE Maid-o'-Dreams, with your
Eerie eyes, so clear and pure,
Gazing, where we fain would see,
Into far futurity,—
Tell us what you there behold
In your visions manifold !
What is on beyond our sight,
Biding till the morrow's light,
Fairer than we see to-day,
As our dull eyes only may ?

Little Maid-o'-Dreams, with face
Like as in some woodland place,
Lifts a lily, chaste and white,
From the shadow to the light,—
Tell us, by your subtle glance,
What strange sorcery enchants
You as now—here, yet afar
As the realms of moon and star ?
Have you magic lamp and ring,
And genii for vassaling ?

Little Maid-o'-Dreams, confess
You're divine and nothing less—
For with mortal palms, we fear,
Yet must pet you, dreaming here—
Yearning, too, to lift the tips
Of your fingers to our lips ;
Fearful still you may rebel,
High and heav'nly oracle !
Thus, though all unmeet our kiss,
Pardon this ! and this ! and this !

Little Maid-o'-Dreams, we call
Truce and favour, knowing all !—
All your magic is, in truth,
Pure foresight and faith of youth ;
You're a child, yet even so,
You're a sage in embryo—
Prescient poet—artist—great
As your dreams anticipate.
Trusting God and man, you do
Just as heaven inspires you to.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.



OLD AUNT MARY'S.

WASN'T it pleasant, O brother mine,
In these old days of the lost sunshine
Of youth—when the Saturday's chores were through,
And the Sunday's wood in the kitchen, too,
And we went visiting—me and you—
Out to Old Aunt Mary's ?

It all comes back so clear to-day !
Though I am as bald as you are grey—
Out by the barn-lot, and down the lane,
We patter along in the dust again,
As light as the tips of the drops of the rain,
Out to Old Aunt Mary's !

We cross the pasture, and through the wood
Where the old grey snag of the poplar stood,
Where the hammering red-heads hopped away,

And the buzzard raised in the clearing sky,
And lolled and circled as we went by,
Out to Old Aunt Mary's !

And then in the dust of the road again,
And the teams we met, and the countrymen ;
And the long highway, with sunshine spread
As thick as butter on country bread—
Our cares behind, and our hearts ahead—
Out to Old Aunt Mary's !

Why, I see her now in the open door,
Where the little gourds grew up the side and o'er
The clapboard roof ! And her face—ah, me !
Wasn't it good for a boy to see—
And wasn't it good for a boy to be
Out to Old Aunt Mary's ?

And O, my brother, so far away,
This is to tell you she waits to-day
To welcome us. Aunt Mary fell
Asleep this morning, whispering—" Tell
The boys to come ! " And all is well
Out to Old Aunt Mary's !
JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.



THE BUTTERFLY'S BALL.

COME, take up your hats, and away let us haste
To the Butterfly's ball and the Grasshopper's feast ;
The trumpeter Gadfly has summon'd the crew,
And the revels are now only waiting for you.

On the smooth, shaven grass by the side of the wood,
Beneath a broad oak that for ages has stood,
See the children of earth and the tenants of air
For an evening's amusement together repair.

And there came the Beetle, so blind and so black,
Who carried the Emmet, his friend, on his back ;
And there was the Gnat, and the Dragon-fly, too,
With all their relations—green, orange, and blue.

And there came the Moth in his plumage of down,
And the Hornet in jacket of yellow and brown,
Who with him the Wasp, his companion, did bring,
But they promised that evening to lay by their sting.

And the sly little Dormouse crept out of his hole,
And led to the feast his blind brother, the Mole ;
And the Snail, with his horns peeping out from his shell,
Came from a great distance—the length of an ell.

A mushroom their table, and on it was laid
A water-dock leaf, which a table-cloth made ;
The viands were various, to each of their taste,
And the Bee brought his honey to crown the repast.

There, close on his haunches, so solemn and wise,
The Frog from a corner looked up to the skies ;
And the Squirrel, well pleased such diversion to see,
Sat cracking his nuts overhead in a tree.

Then out came the Spider, with fingers so fine,
To show his dexterity on the tight line,
From one branch to another the cobwebs he slung,
Then as quick as an arrow he darted along.

But just in the middle—oh ! shocking to tell !—
From his rope in an instant poor Harlequin fell ;
Yet he touch'd not the ground, but with talons outspread,
Hung suspended in air at the end of a thread.

Then the Grasshopper came with a jerk and a spring,
Very long was his leg, though but short was his wing ;
He took but three leaps, and was soon out of sight,
Then chirp'd his own praises the rest of the night.

With step so majestic the Snail did advance,
And promised the gazers a minuet to dance ;
But they all laugh'd so loud that he pull'd in his head,
And went in his own little chamber to bed.

Then as evening gave way to the shadows of night,
The watchman, the Glow-worm, came out with his light :
Then home let us hasten while yet we can see,
For no watchman is waiting for you and for me.

WILLIAM ROSCOE.



BUDS AND BABIES.

A MILLION buds are born that never blow,
That, sweet with promise, lift a pretty head,
To blush and wither on a barren bed,
And leave no fruit to show.

Sweet, unfulfilled. Yet have I understood
One joy, by their fragility made plain :
Nothing was ever beautiful in vain,
Or all in vain was good.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

HOLY INNOCENTS.

SLEEP, little baby, sleep,
The holy angels love thee,
And guard thy bed and keep
A blessed watch above thee.
No spirit can come near,
Nor evil beast to harm thee ;
Sleep, sweet, devoid of fear,
When nothing need alarm thee.

The Love which doth not sleep,
The eternal Arms surround thee ;
The Shepherd of the sheep
In perfect love hath found thee.
Sleep through the holy night,
Christ-kept from snare and sorrow,
Until thou wake to light
And love and warmth to-morrow.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.



BALLAD.

“ Soft white lamb in the daisy meadow,
Come hither and play with me,
For I am lonesome and I am tired
Underneath the apple tree.”

“ There’s your husband, if you are lonesome, lady,
And your bed if you want for rest,
And your baby for a playfellow,
With a soft hand for your breast.”

- “ Fair white dove in the sunshine,
Perched on the ashen bough,
Come and perch by me and coo to me
While the buds are blowing now.”
- “ I must keep my nestlings warm, lady,
Underneath my downy breast,
There’s your baby to coo and crow to you
While I brood upon my nest.”
- “ Faint white rose, come lie on my breast,
Come lie there with your thorn ;
For I’ll be dead at the vesper-bell,
And buried the morrow morn.”
- “ There’s blood on your lily breast, lady,
Like roses when they blow,
And there’s blood upon your little hand
That should be white as snow ;
I will stay amid my fellows
Where the lilies grow.”
- “ But it’s oh, my own, own little babe,
That I had you here to kiss,
And to comfort me in the strange next world,
Though I slighted you so in this.”
- “ You shall kiss both cheek and chin, mother,
And kiss me between the eyes,
Or ever the moon is on her way
And the pleasant stars arise :
You shall kiss and kiss your fill, mother,
In the nest of Paradise.”

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

JOHNNY

(FOUNDED ON AN ANECDOTE ON THE FIRST
FRENCH REVOLUTION).

JOHNNY had a golden head
Like a golden mop in blow,
Right and left his curls would spread
In a glory and a glow,
And they framed his honest face
Like stray sunbeams out of place.

Long and thick, they half could hide
How threadbare his patched jacket hung ;
They used to be his mother's pride ;
She praised them with a tender tongue,
And stroked them with a loving finger,
That smoothed and stroked and loved to linger.

On a doorstep Johnny sat,
Up and down the street looked he ;
Johnny did not own a hat,
Hot or cold tho' days might be ;
Johnny did not own a boot
To cover up his muddy foot.

Johnny's face was pale and thin—
Pale with hunger and with crying—
For his mother lay within,
Talked and tossed and seemed a-dying,
While Johnny racked his brain to think
How to get her help and drink,

Get her physic, get her tea,
Get her bread and something nice ;
Not a penny-piece had he,
And scarce a shilling might suffice ;
No wonder that his soul was sad
When not one penny-piece he had.

As he sat there, thinking, moping,
Because his mother's wants were many,
Wishing much, but scarcely hoping
To earn a shilling or a penny,
A friendly neighbour passed him by
And questioned him—Why did he cry ?

Alas ! his trouble soon was told :
He did not cry for cold or hunger,
Though he was hungry both and cold ;
He only felt more weak and younger,
Because he wished so to be old
And apt at earning pence or gold.

Kindly that neighbour was, but poor,
Scant coin had he to give or lend ;
And well he guessed those needed more
Than pence or shillings to befriend
The helpless woman in her straight—
So much loved, yet so desolate.

One way he saw, and only one ;
He would—he could not—give the advice,
And yet he must : the widow's son
Had curls of gold would fetch their price ;
Long curls which might be clipped, and sold
For silver, or perhaps for gold.

Our Johnny, when he understood
Which shop it was that purchased hair,
Ran off as briskly as he could,
And in a trice stood cropped and bare,
Too short of hair to fill a locket,
But jingling money in his pocket.

Precious money—tea and bread,
Physic, ease, for mother dear,
Better than a golden head :
Yet our hero dropped a tear
When he spied himself close shorn,
Barer much than lamb new-born.

His mother throve upon the money,
Ate and revived, and kissed her son :
But oh ! when she perceived her Johnny,
And understood what he had done,
All and only for her sake,
She sobbed as if her heart would break.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.



MY BOYHOOD.

Ah me ! those joyous days are gone !
I little dreamt, till they had flown,
How fleeting were the hours !
For, lest he break the pleasing spell,
Time bears for youth a muffled bell,
And hides his face in flowers !

Ah ! well I mind me of the days,
Still bright in memory's fluttering rays,
When all was fair and new ;
When knaves were only found in books,
And friends were known by friendly looks,
And love was always true !

While yet of sin I scarcely dreamed,
And everything was what it seemed,
And all too bright for choice ;
When fays were wont to guard my sleep,
And *Crusoe* still could make me weep,
And *Santa Claus*, rejoice !

When heaven was pictured to my thought
(In spite of all my mother taught
Of happiness serene)
A theatre of boyish plays—
One glorious round of holidays,
Without a school between !

Ah me ! those joyous days are gone !
I little dreamt, till they were flown,
How fleeting were the hours !
For, lest he break the pleasing spell,
Time bears for youth a muffled bell,
And hides his face in flowers !

JOHN GODFREY SAXE.



LITTLE BOY.

LITTLE boy, whose great round eye
Hath the tincture of the sky,
 Answer now, and tell me true,
Whence and what and why are you?
And he answered—"Mother's boy."

 Yes, yes, I know,
 But 'twas not so
 Six years ago.
You are mother's anxious joy,
 Mother's pet,
 But yet—
A trouble came within the eye
That had some tincture of the sky.

I looked again, within that eye
 There was a question, not reply—
 I only shaded back his hair,
And kissed him there;
But from that day
There was more thinking and less play;
 And that round eye,
That had the tincture of the sky,
Was somewhat shaded in its sheen;
It looked and listened far away,
As if for what can not be seen.

When I turned about and cried,
 But who am I,
Prompting thus the dawning soul?
 I cannot hide
 The want of a reply,

Though travelling nearer to the goal,
Where we take no note of time :
I can only say I AM,
A phrase, a word, that hath no rhyme,
The name God called Himself, the best
To answer the weak patriarch's guest.

“ Why talk nonsense to the child ? ”
Asks the mother from the fire,
Listening through both back and ears,
Listening with a mother's fears :—
“ Already is he something wild,
Says that he can fly downstairs !
I do desire
You questioning men should have a care,—
He is my child, my only one,
You'll make him try to touch the sun ! ”

WILLIAM BELL SCOTT.



LULLABY.

THE spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen ;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near my fairy queen.

Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby :
Lulla, lulla, lullaby ; lulla, lulla, lullaby.
Never harm
Nor spell nor charm
Come our lovely lady nigh ;
So, good-night, with lullaby.

Weaving spiders, come not here ;
Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence !
Beetles black, approach not near ;
Worm nor snail do no offence.

Philomel, with melody,
Sing in one sweet lullaby ;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby ; lulla, lulla, lullaby.
Never harm
Nor spell nor charm
Come our lovely lady nigh ;
So, good-night, with lullaby.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.



TO WILLIAM SHELLEY.

THE billows on the beach are leaping around it,
The bark is weak and frail,
The sea looks black, and the clouds that bound it
Darkly strew the gale.
Come with me, thou delightful child,
Come with me, though the wave is wild,
And the winds are loose, we must not stay,
Or the slaves of the law may rend thee away.

They have taken thy brother and sister dear,
They have made them unfit for thee ;
They have withered the smile and dried the tear
Which should have been sacred to me.
To a blighting faith and a cause of crime
They have bound them slaves in youthly prime,
And they will curse my name and thee
Because we are fearless and free.

Come thou, belovèd as thou art;
Another sleepeth still
Near thy sweet mother's anxious heart,
Which thou with joy shalt fill,
With fairest smiles of wonder thrown
On that which is indeed our own,
And which in distant lands will be
The dearest playmate unto thee.

Fear not the tyrants will rule for ever,
Or the priests of the evil faith;
They stand on the brink of that raging river
Whose waves they have tainted with death.
It is fed from the depth of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams, and rages, and swells;
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
Like wrecks on the surge of eternity.

Rest, rest, and shriek not, thou gentle child!
The rocking of the boat thou fearest,
And the cold spray and the clamour wild—
There, sit between us two, those dearest—
Me and thy mother—well we know
The storm at which thou tremblest so,
With all its dark and hungry graves,
Less cruel than the savage slaves
Who hunt us o'er these sheltering waves.

This hour will in thy memory
Be a dream of days forgotten long;
We soon shall dwell by the azure sea
Of serene and golden Italy,
Or Greece, the mother of the free;

And I will teach thine infant tongue
To call upon these heroes old
In their own language, and will mould
Thy growing spirit in the flame
Of Grecian lore, that by such name
A patriot's birthright thou mayst claim !

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.



EPITAPH *

IN HALES-OWEN CHURCHYARD, ON MISS ANNE POWELL.

HERE, here she lies, a budding rose,
Blasted before its bloom,
Whose innocence did sweets disclose
Beyond that flower's perfume.

To those who for her death are grieved,
This consolation's given—
She's from the storms of life relieved
To shine more bright in Heaven.

WILLIAM SHENSTONE.



BEAUTIFUL CHILD.

BEAUTIFUL child by thy mother's knee,
In the mystic future what wilt thou be ?
A demon of sin, or an angel sublime—
A poison Upas, or innocent thyme—

* Commonly attributed, with slight alterations, to Robert Burns, and wrongly embraced in many editions of the Scottish poet's works.

A spirit of evil flashing *down*
With the lurid light of a fiery crown—
Or gliding *up* with a shining track,
Like the morning star that ne'er looks back.
Daintiest dreamer that ever smiled,
Which wilt thou be, my beautiful child ?

Beautiful child in my garden bowers,
Friend of the butterflies, birds, and flowers.
Pure as the sparkling crystalline stream,
Jewels of truth in thy fairy eyes beam.
Was there ever a whiter soul than thine
Worshipped by love in a mortal shrine ?
My heart thou has gladdened for two sweet years
With rainbows of hope through mists of tears—
Mists beyond which thy sunny smile,
With its halo of glory, beams all the while.

Beautiful child, to thy look is given
A gleam serene—not of earth, but of heaven ;
With thy tell-tale eyes and prattling tongue,
Would thou could'st ever thus be young,
Like the liquid strain of the mocking bird,
From stair to hall thy voice is heard ;
How oft in the garden nooks thou'rt found,
With flowers thy curly head around,
And kneeling beside me with figure so quaint,
Oh ! who would not dote on my infant saint !

Beautiful child, what thy fate shall be,
Perchance is wisely hidden from me ;
A fallen star, thou may'st leave my side,
And of sorrow and shame become the bride—
Shivering, quivering, through the cold street,
With a curse behind and before thy feet,

Ashamed to live, and afraid to die ;
No home, no friend, and a pitiless sky.
Merciful Father ! my brain grows wild ;
Oh ! keep from evil my beautiful child !

Beautiful child, may'st thou soar above,
A warbling cherub of joy and love ;
A drop on eternity's mighty sea,
A blossom on life's immortal tree—
Floating, flowering, evermore,
In the blessed light of the golden shore.
And as I gaze on thy sinless bloom
And thy radiant face, they dispel my gloom ;
I feel He will keep thee undefiled,
And His love protect by beautiful child.

W. A. H. SIGOURNEY.



LINES TO LITTLE MARY.

I'm bidden, little Mary, to write verses unto thee :
I'd fain obey the bidding, if it rested but with me ;
But the mistresses I'm bound to (nine ladies, hard to
please)

Of all their stores poetic so closely keep the keys,
That 'tis only now and then—by good luck, as we may
say—

A couplet or a rhyme or two falls fairly in my way.

Fruit forced is never half so sweet as that comes quite
in season ;

But some folk must be satisfied with rhyme, in spite of
reason ;

So, Muses, all befriend me—albeit of help so chary—
To string the pearls of poesy for loveliest little Mary.

And yet, ye pagan damsels, not over-fond am I
 To invoke your haughty favours, your fount of Castaly :
 I've sipped a purer fountain; I've decked a holier
 shrine ;
 I own a mightier mistress—O Nature, *thou* art mine !

And only to that well-head, sweet Mary, I resort,
 For just an artless verse or two—a simple strain and
 short—
 Befitting well a pilgrim, way-worn with care and strife,
 To offer thee, young traveller, in the morning track of
 life.

There's many a one will tell thee, 'tis all with roses gay ;
 There's many a one will tell thee, 'tis thorny all the way.
 Deceivers are they every one, dear child, who thus
 pretend :
 God's ways are not unequal ; make Him thy trusted
 friend,
 And many a path of pleasantness He'll clear away for
 thee,
 However dark and intricate the labyrinth may be.

I need not wish thee beauty, I need not wish thee
 grace ;
 Already both are budding in that infant form and face.
 I *will* not wish thee grandeur, I *will* not wish thee
 wealth,
 But only a contented heart, peace, competence, and
 health ;
 Fond friends to love thee dearly, and honest friends to
 chide,
 And faithful ones to cleave to thee, whatever may
 betide.

And now, my little Mary, if better things remain,
Unheeded in my blindness, unnoticed in my strain,
I'll sum them up succinctly in "English undefiled"—
My mother-tongue's best benison—God bless thee,
precious child !

CAROLINE B. SOUTHEY.



THE BATTLE OF BLENHEIM.

It was a summer evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done ;
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun,
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild, Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
That he beside the rivulet,
In playing there, had found ;
He came to ask what he had found
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by ;
And then the old man shook his head,
And, with a natural sigh,
" 'Tis some poor fellow's skull," said he,
" Who fell in the great victory.

“I find them in the garden, for
There’s many here about,
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out ;
For many a thousand men,” said he,
“ Were slain in the great victory.”

“*Now, tell us what ’twas all about,*”
Young Peterkin he cries,
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes ;
“*Now tell us all about that war,*
And what they killed each other for.”

“It was the English,” Kaspar cried,
“That put the French to rout ;
But what they killed each other for
I could not well make out.
But everybody said,” quoth he,
“That ’twas a famous victory.

“My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by,
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly ;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

“With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born infant, died.
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

“They said it was a shocking sight,
After the field was won,
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun ;
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

“Great praise the Duke of Marlbro’ won,
And our good Prince Eugene ’—
“*Why, ’twas a very wicked thing !*”
Said little Wilhelmine.
“Nay—nay—my little girl,” quoth he,
“It was a famous victory.

“And everybody praised the Duke
Who such a fight did win.”
“*But what good came of it at last ?*”
Quoth little Peterkin.
“That I cannot tell,” said he,
“But ’twas a famous victory.”

ROBERT SOUTHEY.



THE BURNING BABE.

As I, in hoary winter's night, stood shivering in the
snow,
Surprised I was with sudden heat, which made my
heart to glow,
And lifting up a tearful eye to view what fire was near,
A pretty babe, all burning bright, did in the air appear;

Who, scorched with excessive heat, such floods of tears
did shed,
As though his floods should quench his flames, which
with his tears were fed—
“Alas!” quoth he, “but newly born, in fiery heats I
fry,
Yet none approach to warm their hearts or feel my fire
but I!
My faultless breast the furnace is; the fuel, wounding
thorns;
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoke; the ashes,
shame and scorns:
The fuel Justice layeth on, and Mercy blows the coals;
The metal in this furnace wrought are men’s defiled
souls,
For which, as now, on fire I am to work them to their
good:
So will I melt into a bath to wash them in my blood!”
With this He vanished out of sight, and swiftly shrunk
away;
And straight I called unto mind that it was Christmas-
day.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.



A NECKLACE OF LOVE.

No rubies of red for my lady—
No jewel that glitters and charms,
But the light of the skies in a little one’s eyes
And a necklace of two little arms.

Of two little arms that are clinging
 (O ne'er was a necklace like this !),
And the wealth o' the world and love's sweetness im-
 pearled
In the joy of a little one's kiss.

A necklace of love for my lady
 That was linked by the angels above ;
No other but this—and the tender, sweet kiss
 That sealeth a little one's love.

FRANK L. STANTON.



A BLESSING FOR THE BLESSED.

WHEN the sun has left the hill-top,
 And the daisy-fringe is furled,
When the birds from wood and meadow
 In their hidden nests are curled,
Then I think of all the babies
 That are sleeping in the world. . . .

There are babies in the high lands
 And babies in the low,
There are pale ones wrapped in furry skins
 On the margin of the snow,
And brown ones naked in the isles
 Where all the spices grow.

And some are in the palace
 On a white and downy bed,
And some are in the garret
 With a clout beneath their head,
And some are on the cold, hard earth,
 Whose mothers have no bread,

O little men and women,
 Dear flowers yet unblown !
O little kings and beggars
 Of the pageant yet unshown !
Sleep soft and dream pale dreams now,
 To-morrow is your own. . .

Though some shall walk in darkness,
 And others in the light,
Though some shall smile and others weep
 In the darkness of the night,
When life has touched with many hues
 Your souls now clear and white.

God save you, little children,
 And make your eyes to see
His fingers pointing in the dark
 Whatever you may be,
Till one and all, through life and death,
 Pass to eternity. . .

LAURENCE ALMA TADEMA.



MY MOTHER.

Who fed me from her gentle breast,
And hushed me in her arms to rest,
And on my cheek sweet kisses prest?
 My Mother.

When sleep forsook my open eye,
Who was it sung sweet hushaby
And rocked me that I should not cry?
 My Mother.

Who sat and watched my infant head
When sleeping on my cradle bed,
And tears of sweet affection shed?
My Mother.

When pain and sickness made me cry,
Who gazed upon my heavy eye,
And wept for fear that I should die?
My Mother.

Who dressed my doll in clothes so gay,
And taught me pretty how to play,
And minded all I had to say?
My Mother.

Who ran to help me when I fell,
And would some pretty story tell,
Or kiss the place to make it well?
My Mother.

Who taught my infant lips to pray,
And love God's holy Book and day,
And walk in wisdom's pleasant way?
My Mother.

And can I ever cease to be
Affectionate and kind to thee,
Who was so very kind to me,
My Mother?

Ah! no, the thought I cannot bear,
And, if God please my life to spare,
I hope I shall reward thy care,
My Mother.

When thou art feeble, old, and grey,
My healthy arms shall be thy stay,
And I will soothe thy pains away,
My Mother.

And when I see thee hang thy head,
'Twill be my turn to watch thy bed,
And tears of sweet affection shed,
My Mother.

For could our Father in the skies
Look down with pleased or loving eyes
If ever I could dare despise
My Mother?

ANN TAYLOR.



MEDDLESOME MATTY.

ONE ugly trick has often spoiled
The sweetest and the best ;
Matilda, though a pleasant child,
One ugly trick possessed,
Which, like a cloud before the skies,
Hid all her better qualities.

Sometimes she'd lift the tea-pot lid,
To peep at what was in it ;
Or tilt the kettle, if you did
But turn your back a minute.
In vain you told her not to touch,
Her trick of meddling grew so much.

Her grandmamma went out one day,
And, by mistake, she laid
Her spectacles and snuff-box gay
Too near the little maid ;
“Ah ! well,” thought she, “I’ll try them on
As soon as grandmamma is gone.”

Forthwith she placed upon her nose
The glasses large and wide ;
And looking round, as I suppose,
The snuff-box too she spied :
“Oh ! what a pretty box is that ;
I’ll open it,” said little Matt.

“I know that grandmamma would say—
‘Don’t meddle with it, dear ;’
But then, she’s far enough away,
And no one else is near,
Besides, what can there be amiss
In opening such a box as this ?”

So thumb and finger went to work
To move the stubborn lid,
And presently a mighty jerk
The mighty mischief did ;
For all at once, ah ! woeful case,
The snuff came puffing in her face.

Poor eyes, and nose, and mouth beside,
A dismal sight presented ;
In vain, as bitterly she cried,
Her folly she repented ;
In vain she ran about for ease—
She could do nothing now but sneeze.

She dashed the spectacles away
To wipe her tingling eyes,
And, as in twenty bits they lay,
Her grandmamma she spies.
“Heyday ! and what’s the matter now ?”
Says grandmamma, with lifted brow.

Matilda, smarting with the pain,
And tingling still, and sore,
Made many a promise to refrain
From meddling evermore.
And ’tis a fact, as I have heard,
She ever since has kept her word.

ANN TAYLOR.



TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR.

TWINKLE, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are ;
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When it nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light—
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveller in the dark
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He could not see which way to go
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye
Till the sun is in the sky.

So your bright and tiny spark
Lights the traveller in the dark.
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

JANE TAYLOR.



A BABY SONG.

WHAT does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.

Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger.
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say
In her bed at peep of day?
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.

Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger.
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby, too, shall fly away.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON.

AS THROUGH THE LAND.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out, I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears !
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above his little grave,
O there above his little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON.



SWEET AND LOW.

SWEET and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea ;
Low, low, breath and blow,
Wind of the western sea !
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon and blow,
Blow him again to me ;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
 Father will come to thee soon ;
Rest, rest on mother's breast,
 Father will come to thee soon ;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
 Under the silver moon :
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON.



LETTY'S GLOBE.

WHEN Letty had scarce passed her third glad year,
 And her young, artless words began to flow,
One day we gave the child a coloured sphere
 Of the wide earth, that she might mark and know,
By tint and outline, all its sea and land.
 She patted all the world : old empires peep'd
Between her baby fingers ; her soft hand
 Was welcome at all frontiers. How she leaped
And laughed and prattled in her world-wide bliss !
 But when we turned her sweet, unlearned eye
 On our own dear isle, she raised a joyous cry—
 “ Oh yes ! I see it ; Letty's home is there ! ”
And while she hid all England with a kiss,
 Bright over Europe fell her golden hair.

CHARLES TENNYSON-TURNER.



A WALK IN A CHURCHYARD.

WE walk'd within the churchyard bounds,
My little boy and I—
He, laughing, running happy rounds,
I, pacing mournfully.

“Nay, child, it is not well,” I said,
“Among the graves to shout ;
To laugh and play among the dead,
And make this noisy rout.”

A moment to my side he clung,
Leaving his merry play—
A moment still'd his joyous tongue,
Almost as hush'd as they.

Then, quite forgetting the command
In life's exultant burst
Of early glee, let go my hand,
Joyous, as at the first.

And now I did not check him more ;
For, taught by Nature's face,
I had grown wiser than before,
Even in that moment's space.

She spread no funeral pall above
That patch of churchyard ground,
But the same azure vault of love
As hung o'er all around.

And white clouds o'er that spot would pass
As freely as elsewhere ;
The sunshine on no other grass
A richer hue might wear.

And, form'd from out that very mould
In which the dead did lie,
The daisy, with its eye of gold,
Look'd up into the sky.

The rook was wheeling over head,
Nor hasten'd to be gone ;
The small bird did its glad notes shed,
Perch'd on a grey head-stone.

And God, I said, would never give
This light upon the earth ;
Nor bid in childhood's heart to live
These springs of gushing mirth ;

If our true wisdom were to mourn
And linger with the dead—
To nurse, as wisest, thoughts forlorn
Of worm and earthy bed.

Oh ! no, the glory earth puts on,
The child's uncheck'd delight,
Both witness to a triumph won,
If we but judge aright.

A triumph won o'er sin and death :
From these the Saviour saves ;
And, like a happy infant, Faith
Can play among the graves.

ARCHBISHOP TRENCH.



THE FIRST FLEDGLING.

It seems so lonely in the nest
Since one dear bird is flown,
To fashion, with its chosen mate,
A home-nest of its own.
We miss the twitter and the stir,
The eager stretching wings,
The flashing eyes, the ready song,
And—oh ! so many things !

We find it hard to understand
The changes wrought by years ;
How our own sprightly little girl
A stately wife appears.
It seems to us she still should be
Among her dolls and toys,
Making the farm-house sound again
With “ Little Tomboy’s ” noise.

When berries ripen in the sun,
We miss her fingers light,
Who used to heap them up for tea,
Dusted with sugar white.
They never more will taste as fresh
As when she brought them in,
Her face ablush with rosiness
From sunny brow to chin.

The autumn peaches always turned
Their reddest cheek to her ;
She knew the ferneries of the woods,
And where the wild-flowers were ;

And somehow since she left the nest,
We miss her busy hand
As gatherer and garnisher,
Whoever else has planned.

If little Gold-locks asks of me,
“When will my sister come?
Will it be very, *very* long?”
I seem as one struck dumb.
But when her brother bites his lip
And turns to hide a tear,
I answer, with a flashing smile,
“Not long, I hope, my dear.”

She flutters back more bright with joy
Than when she flew away,
And we are happy—only this—
She never more will stay.
A bird of transit, tarrying
Not long in the old nest,
We scarce could bear it, save we know
God’s holy laws are best.

MRS. EMMA TUTTLE.



THE RETREAT.

HAPPY those early days, when I
Shined in my Angel-infancy !
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white, celestial thought ;

When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my first Love,
And, looking back, at that short space
Could see a glimpse of His bright face ;
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of Eternity ;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense
A several sin in every sense ;
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.

Oh, how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track,
That I might once more reach that plain
Where first I left my glorious train ;
From whence the enlightened spirit sees
That shady City of Palm Trees !
But, ah ! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers on the way :
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move ;
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

HENRY VAUGHAN.



A CRADLE SONG.

HUSH ! my dear, lie still and slumber ;
Holy angels guard thy bed !
Heavenly blessings without number
Gently falling on thy head.

Sleep, my babe ; thy food and raiment,
House and home, thy friends provide ;
All without thy care and payment
All thy wants are well supplied.

How much better thou'rt attended
Than the Son of God could be,
When from Heaven He descended,
And became a child like thee !

Soft and easy is thy cradle ;
Coarse and hard thy Saviour lay,
When His birth-place was a stable,
And His softest bed was hay.

See the kindly shepherds round Him,
Telling wonders from the sky !
When they sought Him, there they found Him,
With his Virgin-Mother by.

See the lovely babe a-dressing ;
Lovely infant, how He smiled !
When He wept, the mother's blessing
Soothed and hushed the holy Child.

Lo, He slumbers in His manger,
Where the honest oxen fed ;
—Peace, my darling ! here's no danger !
Here's no ox a-near thy bed !

May'st thou live to know and fear Him,
Trust and love Him all thy days :
Then go dwell for ever near Him,
See His face, and sing His praise.

I could give thee thousand kisses,
Hoping what I most desire :
Not a mother's fondest wishes
Can to greater joys aspire.

ISAAC WATTS.



LITTLE BELL.

PIPED the Blackbird on the beechwood spray,
“ Pretty maid, slow wandering this way,
What's your name ? ” quoth he.
“ What's your name ? Oh, stop and straight unfold,
Pretty maid with showery curls of gold.”
“ Little Bell,” said she.

Little Bell sat down beneath the rocks,
Tossed aside her gleaming, golden locks,
“ Bonnie bird ! ” quoth she,
“ Sing me your best song before I go.”
“ Here's the very finest song I know,
Little Bell,” said he.

And the Blackbird piped : you never heard
Half so gay a song from any bird ;
 Full of quips and wiles,
Now so round and rich, now soft and slow,
All for love of that sweet face below,
 Dimpled o'er with smiles.

And the while that bonnie bird did pour
His full heart out freely o'er and o'er,
 'Neath the morning skies,
In the little childish heart below
All the sweetness seemed to grow and grow,
And shine forth in happy overflow
 From the brown, bright eyes.

Down the dell she tripped, and through the glade :
Peeped the Squirrel from the hazel shade,
 And from out the tree,
Swung and leaped and frolicked, void of fear,
While bold Blackbird piped, that all might hear,
 " Little Bell ! " piped he.

Little Bell sat down amid the fern ;
" Squirrel, Squirrel ! to your task return ;
 Bring me nuts," quoth she.
Up, away ! the frisky Squirrel hies,
Golden wood-lights glancing in his eyes,
 And adown the tree,
Great ripe nuts, kissed brown by July sun,
In the little lap drop, one by one—
Hark ! how Blackbird pipes to see the fun !
 " Happy Bell ! " pipes he.

Little Bell looked up and down the glade :
" Squirrel, Squirrel, from the nut-tree shade,

Bonnie Blackbird, if you're not afraid,
Come and share with me ! ”
Down came Squirrel, eager for his fare,
Down came bonnie Blackbird, I declare ;
Little Bell gave each his honest share ;
Ah ! the merry three !

And the while those frolic playmates twain,
Piped and frisked from bough to bough again,
’Neath the morning skies—
In the little childish heart below
All the sweetness seemed to grow and grow,
And shine out in happy overflow
From her brown, bright eyes.

By her snow-white cot, at close of day,
Knelt sweet Bell, with folded palms, to pray :
Very calm and clear
Rose the praying voice to where, unseen,
In blue heaven an angel shape serene
Paused awhile to hear.

“ What good child is this,” the angel said,
“ That with happy heart, beside her bed,
Prays so lovingly ? ”
Low and soft, oh ! very low and soft,
Crooned the Blackbird in the orchard croft,
“ Bell, dear Bell ! ” crooned he.

“ Whom God’s creatures love,” the angel fair
Murmured, “ God doth bless with angel’s care ;
Child, thy bed shall be
Folded safe from harm ; love, deep and kind,
Shall watch round and leave good gifts behind,
Little Bell, for thee ! ”

THOMAS WESTWOOD.

THE BAREFOOT BOY.

BLESSINGS on thee, little man,
Barefoot boy, with cheeks of tan !
With thy turned-up pantaloons
And thy merry whistled tunes ;
With thy red lip, redder still
Kissed by strawberries on the hill ;
With the sunshine on thy face
Through thy torn brim's jaunty grace ;
From my heart I give thee joy,—
I was once a barefoot boy !
Prince thou art—the grown-up man
Only is Republican.
Let the million-dollar'd ride !
Barefoot, trudging at his side,
Thou hast more than he can buy
In the reach of ear and eye—
Outward sunshine, inward joy,
Blessings on thee, barefoot boy !

O for boyhood's painless play,
Sleep that wakes in laughing day,
Health that mocks the doctor's rules,
Knowledge never learned of schools,
Of the wild bee's morning chase,
Of the wild flowers' time and place,
Flight of fowl and habitude
Of the tenants of the wood ;
How the tortoise bears his shell ;
How the woodchuck digs his cell,
And the ground mole sinks his well ;
How the robin feeds her young,
How the oriole's nest is hung ;

Where the whitest lilies blow,
Where the freshest berries grow,
Where the ground nut trails its vine,
Where the wood grape's clusters shine :
Of the black wasp's cunning way,
Mason of his walls of clay,
And the architectural plans
Of grey hornet artisans !—
For, eschewing books and tasks,
Nature answers all he asks ;
Hand in hand with her he walks,
Face to face with her he talks,
Part and parcel of her joy—
Blessings on the barefoot boy !

O for boyhood's time of June,
Crowding years in one brief moon,
When all things I heard or saw,
Me, their master, waited for.
I was rich in flowers and trees,
Humming-birds and honey-bees ;
For my sport the squirrel played,
Plied the snouted mole his spade ;
For my taste the blackberry cone
Purpled over hedge and stone ;
Laughed the brook for my delight
Through the day and through the night ;
Whispering at the garden wall,
Talked with me from fall to fall ;
Mine the sand-rimmed pickeril pond,
Mine the walnut slopes beyond,
Mine, on bending orchard trees,
Apples of Hesperides !
Still as my horizon grew,

Larger grew my riches too,
All the world I saw or knew
Seemed a complex Chinese toy,
Fashioned for a barefoot boy !

O for festal dainties spread,
Like my bowl of milk and bread—
Pewter spoon and bowl of wood,
On the door stone, grey and rude !
O'er me, like a regal tent,
Cloudy-ribbed, the sunset bent,
Purple-curtained, fringed with gold,
Looped in many a wide-swung fold ;
While for music came the play
Of the pied frogs' orchestra ;
And, to light the noisy choir,
Lit the fly his lamp of fire.
I was monarch ; pomp and joy
Waited on the barefoot boy !

Cheerily, then, my little man,
Live and laugh, as boyhood can !
Though the flinty slopes be hard,
Stubble-speared the new-mown sward,
Every morn shall lead thee through
Fresh baptisms of the dew ;
Every evening from thy feet
Shall the cool wind kiss the heat,
All too soon these feet must hide
In the prison cells of pride,
Lose the freedom of the sod,
Like a colt's for work be shod,
Made to tread the mills of toil,
Up and down in ceaseless moil ;

Happy if their track be found
Never on forbidden ground ;
Happy if they sink not in
Quick and treacherous sands of sin.
Ah ! that thou couldst know thy joy,
Ere it passes, barefoot boy !

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.



VESTA.

O CHRIST of God ! whose life and death
Our own have reconciled,
Most quietly, most tenderly
Take home thy star-named child !

Thy grace is in her patient eyes,
Thy words are on her tongue ;
The very silence round her seems
As if the angels sung.

- Her smile is as a listening child's
Who hears its mother call ;
The lilies of Thy perfect peace
About her pillow fall.

She leans from out our clinging arms
To rest herself in Thine ;
Alone to Thee, dear Lord, can we
Our well-beloved resign !

O, less for her than for ourselves
We bow our heads and pray ;
Her setting star, like Bethlehem's,
To Thee shall point the way !

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

IN SCHOOL-DAYS.

STILL sits the school-house by the road,
A ragged beggar sunning ;
Around it still the sumachs grow,
And blackberry vines are running.

Within the master's desk is seen,
Deep scarred by raps official ;
The warping floor, the battered seats,
The jack-knife's carved initial ;

The charcoal frescoes on its wall ;
Its door's worn sill, betraying
The feet that, creeping slow to school,
Went storming out to playing !

Long years ago a winter sun
Shone over it at setting ;
Lit up its western window-panes,
And low eaves' icy fretting.

It touched the tangled golden curls,
And brown eyes full of grieving,
Of one who still her steps delayed
When all the school were leaving.

For near her stood the little boy
Her childish favour singled ;
His cap pulled low upon a face
Where pride and shame were mingled.

Pushing with restless feet the snow
To right and left, he lingered ;—
As restlessly her tiny hands
The blue-checked apron fingered.

He saw her lift her eyes ; he felt
The soft hand's light caressing,
And heard the tremble of her voice,
As if a fault confessing.

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word :
I hate to go above you,
Because,"—the brown eyes lower fell,—
"Because, you see, I love you !"

Still memory to a grey-haired man
That sweet child-face is showing.
Dear girl ! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing !

He lives to learn in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her,—because they love him.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.



CHILD-SONGS.

Still linger in our noon of time
And our Saxon tongue
The echoes of the home-born hymns
The Aryan mothers sung.

And childhood had its litanies
In every age and clime ;
The earliest cradles of the race
Were rocked to poet's rhyme.

Nor sky, nor wave, nor tree, nor flower,
Nor green earth's virgin sod,
So moved the singer's heart of old
As these small ones of God.

The mystery of unfolding life
Was more than dawning morn,
Than opening flower or crescent moon—
The human soul new-born !

And still to childhood's sweet appeal
The heart of genius turns,
And more than all the sages teach
From lisping voices learns,—

The voices loved of him who sang,
Where Tweed and Teviot glide,
That sound to-day on all the winds
That blow from Rydal side,—

Heard in the Teuton's household songs,
And folk-lore of the Finn,
Where'er to holy Christmas hearths
The Christ-child enters in !

Before life's sweetest mystery still
The heart in reverence kneels ;
The wonder of the primal birth
The latest mother feels.

We need love's tender lessons taught
As only weakness can ;
God hath his small interpreters ;
The child must teach the man.

We wander wide through evil years,
Our eyes of faith grow dim ;
But he is freshest from His hands
And nearest unto Him !

And haply, pleading long with Him
For sin-sick hearts and cold,
The angels of our childhood still
The Father's face behold.

Of such the kingdom !—Teach thou us,
O Master most divine,
To feel the deep significance
Of these wise words of thine !

The haughty eye shall seek in vain
What innocence beholds ;
No cunning finds the keys of heaven,
No strength its gate unfolds.

Alone to guilelessness and love
That gate shall open fall ;
The mind of pride is nothingness,
The child-like heart is all !

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.



RED RIDING-HOOD.

ON the wide lawn the snow lay deep
Ridged o'er with many a drifted heap ;
The wind that through the pine-trees sung,
The naked elm-boughs tossed and swung ;

While, through the window, frosty-starred
Against the sunset-purple barred,
We saw the sombre crow flap by,
The hawk's grey fleck along the sky,
The crested blue-jay flitting swift,
The squirrel poising on the drift,
Erect, alert, his broad grey tail
Set to the north wind like a sail.

It came to pass, one little lass,
With flattened face against the glass,
And eyes in which the tender dew
Of pity shone, stood gazing through
The narrow space her rosy lips
Had melted from the frost's eclipse ;
"O, see," she cried, "the poor blue jays !
What is it that the black crow says ?
The squirrel lifts his little legs
Because he has no hands, and begs ;
He's asking for my nuts, I know :
May I not feed them on the snow ?"

Half lost within her boots, her head
Warm-sheltered in her hood of red,
Her plaid skirt close about her drawn,
She floundered down the wintry lawn ;
Now struggling through the misty veil
Blown round her by the shrieking gale ;
Now sinking in a drift so low,
Her scarlet hood could scarcely show
Its dash of colour on the snow.

She dropped for bird and beast forlorn
Her little store of nuts and corn,
And thus her timid guests bespoke :—

“Come, squirrel, from your hollow oak—
Come, black old crow—come poor blue jay,
Before your supper’s blown away !
Don’t be afraid, we all are good ;
And I’m mamma’s Red Riding-Hood !”

O Thou whose care is over all,
Who heedest even the sparrow’s fall,
Keep in the little maiden’s breast
The pity which is now its guest !
Let not her cultured years make less
The childhood charm of tenderness,
But let her feel as well as know,
Nor harder with her polish grow !
Unmoved by sentimental grief
That wails along some printed leaf,
But prompt with kindly word and deed
To own the claims of all who need ;
Let the grown woman’s self make good
The promise of Red Riding-Hood !

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.



THE LITTLE PEOPLE.

A DREARY place would be this earth
Were no little people in it ;
The song of life would lose its mirth
Were there no children to begin it.

No little forms, like buds, to grow,
And make the admiring heart surrender ;
No little hands on breast and brow,
To keep the thrilling love-cords tender.

No rosy boys, at wintry morn,
With satchels to the school-house hasting ;
No merry shouts as home they rush,
No precious morsel for their tasting.

Tall, grave, grown people at the door,
Tall, grave, grown people at the table ;
The men on business all intent,
The dames lugubrious as they're able ;

The sterner souls would get more stern,
Unfeeling natures more inhuman,
And man to stoic coldness turn,
And woman would be less than woman.

Life's song, indeed, would lose its charm,
Were there no babies to begin it ;
A doleful place this world would be,
Were there no little people in it.

NATHANIEL P. WILLIS.



SLEEP, BABY, SLEEP !

SLEEP, baby, sleep ! what ails my dear ?
What ails my darling thus to cry ?
Be still, my child, and lend thine ear
To hear me sing' thy lullaby.
My pretty lamb, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my dear ; sweet baby, sleep.

Thou blessed soul, what canst thou fear?
What thing to thee can mischief do?
Thy God is now thy father dear,
His holy Spouse thy mother too.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

Though thy conception was in sin,
A sacred bathing thou hast had ;
And though thy birth unclean hath been,
A blameless babe thou now art made.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my dear ; sweet baby, sleep.

While thus thy lullaby I sing,
For thee great blessings ripening be ;
Thine eldest brother is a King,
And hath a kingdom bought for thee.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

Sweet baby, sleep, and nothing fear ;
For whosoever thee offends
By thy protector threatened are,
And God and angels are thy friends.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

When God with us was dwelling here,
In little babes he took delight ;
Such innocents as thou, my dear.
Are ever precious in His sight.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

A little infant once was He ;
And strength in weakness then was laid
Upon His virgin mother's knee,
That power to thee might be convey'd.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

In this thy frailty and thy need
He friends and helpers doth prepare,
Which thee shall cherish, clothe, and feed,
For of thy weal they tender are.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

The King of kings, when He was born,
Had not so much for outward ease ;
By Him such dressings were not worn,
Nor such-like swaddling clothes as these.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

Within a manger lodged thy Lord,
Where oxen lay, and asses fed ;
Warm rooms we do to thee afford,
An easy cradle for a bed.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

The wants that He did then sustain
Have purchased wealth, my babe, for thee ;
And by His torments and His pain
Thy rest and ease securèd be.
My baby, then, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

Thou hast, yet more, to perfect this,
A promise and an earnest got
Of gaining everlasting bliss,
Though thou, my babe, perceiv'st it not.
Sweet baby, then, forbear to weep ;
Be still, my babe ; sweet baby, sleep.

GEORGE WITHER.



ODE.

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

“ The child is father of the man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.”

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore,—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose ;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare ;

Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair ;
The sunshine is a glorious birth ;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief :
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong :
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep,
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong ;
I hear the echoes through the mountain throng,
The winds come to me from the field of sleep,
And all the earth is gay ;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday ;—
Thou child of joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
shepherd boy !

Ye blessed creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make ; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee ;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
O evil day ! if I were sullen
While the earth itself is adorning,
The sweet May morning,

And the children are pulling,
 On every side,
 In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers ; while the sun shines warm,
And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm :—
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear !
 But there's a tree, of many, one
A single field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone :
 The pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat :
Whither is fled the visionary gleam ?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream ?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar :
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God, who is our home :
Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
 Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy ;
The youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended :
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a mother's mind,

And no unworthy aim,

The homely nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

Behold the child among his new-born blisses,
A six-years' darling of a pigmy size !
See where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes !
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art ;

A wedding or a festival,

A mourning or a funeral ;

And this hath now his heart,

And unto this he frames his song ;

Then he will fit his tongue

To dialogues of business, love, and strife ;

But it will not be long

Ere this be thrown aside,

And with new joy and pride

The little actor cons another part ;

Filling from time to time his " humorous stage "

With all the persons, down to palsied age,

That life brings with her in her equipage ;

As if his whole vocation

Werc endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy soul's immensity ;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind—
 Mighty prophet ! seer blest !
 On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ;
Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by ;
Thou little child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife ?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life !

 O joy ! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live,
 That Nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive !
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benedictions : not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest ;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast :

Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise ;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings ;
Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised :
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing ;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence : truths that wake
To perish never ;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor man nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy !
Hence, in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song !
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound !
We, in thought, will join your throng,

Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May !
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower ;
 We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind ;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be,
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering,
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O ye fountains, meadows, hills, and groves,
Think not of any severing of our loves !
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might :
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they ;
The innocent brightness of a new-born day
 Is lovely yet ;
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality ;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THREE YEARS SHE GREW.

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown ;
This child I to myself will take ;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

"Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse : and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

"She shall be sportive as the fawn,
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs ;
And her's shall be the breathing balm,
And her's the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

"The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her ; for her the willow bend ;
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her ; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place,

Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

“ And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell ;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell.”

Thus Nature spake—the work was done—
How soon my Lucy’s race was run !
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene ;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.



WE ARE SEVEN.

—A SIMPLE child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death ?

I met a little cottage girl :
She was eight years old, she said ;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad ;
Her eyes were fair, and very fair ;
—Her beauty made me glad.

“ Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be ? ”
“ How many ? Seven in all,” she said,
And wondering looked at me.

“ And where are they ? I pray you tell.”
She answered, “ Seven are we ;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

“ Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother ;
And, in the churchyard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.”

“ You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven ! I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.”

Then did the little maid reply—
“ Seven boys and girls are we ;
Two of us in the churchyard lie,
Beneath the churchyard tree.”

“ You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive,
If two are in the churchyard laid,
Then you are only five.”

“ Their graves are green, they may be seen,”
The little maid replied,
“ Twelve steps or more, from my mother’s door,
And they are side by side.

“ My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem ;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

“ And often after sunset, sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

“ The first that died was sister Jane ;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her from her pain ;
And then she went away.

“ So in the churchyard she was laid ;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

“ And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side.”

“ How many are you then,” said I,
“ If they two are in heaven ? ”
Quick was the little Maid’s reply,
“ O Master ! we are seven.”

“ But they are dead ; those two are dead !
Their spirits are in heaven ! ”
’Twas throwing words away ; for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, “ Nay, we are seven ! ”

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



ANONYMOUS PIECES

THE BABES IN THE WOOD.*

Now ponder well, you parents dear,
These words which I shall write ;
A doleful story you shall hear
In time brought forth to light.
A gentleman of good account
In Norfolk dwelt of late,
Who did in honour far surmount
Most men of his estate.

Sore sick he was and like to die,
No help his life could save ;
His wife by him as sick did lie,
And both possess one grave.
No love between these two was lost,
Each was to other kind ;
In love they lived, in love they died,
And left two babes behind :

The one a fine and pretty boy
Not passing three years old,
The other a girl more young than he,
And framed in beauty's mould.
The father left his little son,
As plainly did appear,
When he to perfect age should come,
Three hundred pounds a-year.

* Founded on an actual crime committed in the fifteenth century.
An old house in Norfolk is still pointed out, upon a mantelshelf in
which the entire history of this very pathetic ballad is carved.

And to his little daughter Jane
Five hundred pounds in gold,
To be paid down on marriage-day,
Which might not be controll'd.
But if the children chance to die
Ere they to age should come,
Their uncle should possess their wealth ;
For so the will did run.

“ Now, brother,” said the dying man,
“ Look to my children dear,
Be good unto my boy and girl,
No friends else have they here :
To God and you I recommend
My children dear this day ;
But little while be sure we have
Within this world to stay.

“ You must be father and mother both,
And uncle, all in one ;
God knows what will become of them
When I am dead and gone.”
With that bespake their mother dear :
“ O brother kind,” quoth she,
“ You are the man must bring our babes
To wealth or misery.

“ And if you keep them carefully,
Then God will you reward ;
But if you otherwise should deal,
God will your deeds regard.”
With lips as cold as any stone
They kiss'd their children small :
“ God bless you both, my children dear !”
With that the tears did fall.

These speeches then their brother spake
To this sick couple there :
“ The keeping of your little ones,
Sweet sister, do not fear ;
God never prosper me nor mine,
Nor ought else that I have,
If I do wrong your children dear
When you are laid in grave ! ”

The parents being dead and gone,
The children home he takes,
And brings them straight into his house,
Where much of them he makes.
He had not kept these pretty babes
A twelvemonth and a day,
But for their wealth he did devise
To make them both away.

He bargain'd with two ruffians strong,
Which were of furious mood,
That they should take these children young
And slay them in a wood.
He told his wife an artful tale :
He would the children send
To be brought up in London town
With one that was his friend.

Away then went, those pretty babes,
Rejoicing at that tide,
Rejoicing with a merry mind
They should on cock-horse ride.
They prate and prattle pleasantly,
As they ride on the way,
To those that should their butchers be,
And work their lives' decay :

So that the pretty speech they had
Made murder's heart relent ;
And they that undertook the deed
Full sore did now repent.
Yet one of them, more hard of heart,
Did vow to do his charge,
Because the wretch that hired him
Had paid him very large.

The other won't agree thereto,
So here they fall to strife ;
With one another they did fight
About the children's life :
And he that was of mildest mood
Did slay the other there,
Within an unfrequented wood ;
The babes did quake for fear !

He took the children by the hand,
Tears standing in their eye,
And bade them straightway follow him,
And look they did not cry ;
And two long miles he led them on,
While they for food complain :
" Stay here," quoth he ; " I'll bring you bread
When I come back again."

These pretty babes, with hand in hand,
Went wandering up and down ;
But never more could see the man
Approaching from the town.
Their pretty lips with blackberries
Were all besmear'd and dyed ;
And when they saw the darksome night,
They sat them down and cried.

Thus wander'd these poor innocents,
Till death did end their grief ;
In one another's arms they died,
As wanting due relief :
No burial this pretty pair
From any man receives,
Till Robin Redbreast piously
Did cover them with leaves.

And now the heavy wrath of God
Upon their uncle fell ;
Yea, fearful fiends did haunt his house—
His conscience felt an hell :
His barns were fired, his goods consumed,
His lands were barren made,
His cattle died within the field,
And nothing with him stay'd.

And in a voyage to Portugal
Two of his sons did die ;
And, to conclude, himself was brought
To want and misery :
He pawn'd and mortgaged all his land
Ere seven years came about,
And now at last this wicked act
Did by this means come out :

The fellow that did take in hand
These children for to kill,
Was for a robbery judged to die—
Such was God's blessed will :
Who did confess the very truth,
As here hath been display'd :
The uncle having died in jail,
Where he for debt was laid.

You that executors be made,
And overseers eke,
Of children that be fatherless,
And infants mild and meek,
Take you example by this thing,
And yield to each his right,
Lest God with such-like misery
Your wicked minds requite.



THE UNFINISHED PRAYER.

"Now I lay," repeat it, darling ;
"Lay me," lisped the tiny lips
Of my daughter, kneeling, bending
O'er her folded finger-tips.
"Down to sleep." "To sleep," she murmured,
And the curly head dropped low ;
"I pray the Lord," I gently added,
"You can say it all, you know."

"Pray the Lord," the word came faintly,
Fainter still, "My soul to keep ;"
Then the tired head fairly nodded,
And the child fell fast asleep.
But the dewy eyes half opened
When I clasped her to my breast,
And the dear voice softly whispered,
"Mamma, God knows all the rest."



THE ROAD TO SLUMBERLAND.

WHAT is the road to Slumberland? And when doe
the baby go?

The road lies straight through mother's arms, when th
sun is sinking low.

He goes by the drowsy "land of nods" to the musi
of "lullaby,"

When all the wee lambs are safe in the fold, under th
evening sky.

A soft little nightgown clean and white, a face washe
sweet and fair,

A mother brushing the tangles out of the silken golde
hair.

Two little tired satiny feet, from the shoe and stockin
free;

Two little palms together clasped at the mother
patient knee.

Some baby words that are drowsily lisped to the tende
Shepherd's ear,

And a kiss that only a mother can place on the brow o
her baby dear.

A little round head which nestles at last, close to th
mother's breast,

And then the lullaby soft and low, singing the song o
rest.

And close and closer the blue-veined lids are hiding the
baby eyes ;
As over the road to Slumberland the dear little traveller
hies.

For this is the way, through mother's arms, all dear
little babies go
To the beautiful city of Slumberland, when the sun is
sinking low.



THE LETTERS AT SCHOOL.

ONE day the letters went to school,
And tried to teach each other,
They got so mixed, 'twas really hard
To pick one from the other.

A went in first, and Z went last ;
The rest were all between them—
K, H, and M, and N, O, P,—
I wish you could have seen them.

B, C, D, E, and J, K, H,
Soon jostled well their betters ;
Q, R, S, T—I grieve to say—
Were very naughty letters.

Of course, ere long they came to words—
What else could be expected !
Till E made D, J, C, and T,
Decidedly dejected.

Now through it all the consonants
Were rudest and uncouthest,
While all the pretty vowel girls
Were certainly the smoothest.

The nimble U kept far from Q,
With face demure and moral,
“ Because,” she said, “ we are, we two,
So apt to start a quarrel ! ”

But spiteful P said, “ Pooh for U ! ”
(Which made her feel quite bitter),
And, calling O, L, E, to help,
He really tried to hit her.

Cried A, “ Now, E and C come here !
If both will aid a minute,
Good P will join in making peace !
Or else the mischief’s in it.”

And smiling E, the ready sprite,
Said, “ Yes, and count me double.”
This done, sweet peace shone o’er the scene,
And gone was all the trouble !

Meanwhile, while U and P made up,
The cos’nants looked about them,
And kissed the vowels, for, you see,
They couldn’t do without them.



THE COMING MAN.

A PAIR of very chubby legs,
Encased in scarlet hose ;
A pair of stubby, little boots,
With rather doubtful toes ;
A little kilt, a little coat,
Cut as a mother can—
And lo ! before us strides, in state,
The future “ coming man.”

His eyes perchance will read the stars,
And search their unknown ways ;
Perchance the human heart and soul
Will open to their gaze ;
Perchance their keen and flashing glance
May be a nation’s light—
Those eyes that now are wistful bent
On some “ big fellow’s ” kite.

That brow, where mighty thoughts will dwell
In solemn secret state,
Where fierce Ambition’s restless strength
Shall war with future fate ;
Where Science from now hidden caves
New treasure will outpour—
’Tis knit now with a troubled doubt :
Are two, or three, pence more ?

Those lips—that, in the coming years,
Will plead, or pray or teach,
Whose whispered words, on lightning flash,
From world to world may reach ;

That, sternly grave, may speak command,
Or, smiling, win control—
Are coaxing now for gingerbread
With all a baby's soul !

Those hands—those little busy hands—
So sticky, small, and brown ;
Those hands, whose only mission seems
To tear all order down ;
Who knows what hidden strength may lie
Within their chubby grasp,
Though now 'tis but a toffy-stick
In sturdy hold they clasp.

Ah, blessings on those little hands,
Whose work is not yet done !
And blessings on those little feet,
Whose race is yet unrun !
And blessings on the little brain
That has not learned to plan !
Whate'er the future holds in store,
God bless " the coming man ! "



SANTA CLAUS,

HE comes in the night ! He comes in the night !
He softly, silently comes ;
While the little brown heads on the pillows so white
Are dreaming of bugles and drums.

He cuts through the snow like a ship through the foam,
While the white flakes around him whirl ;
Who tells him I know not, but he findeth the home
Of each good little boy and girl.

His sleigh it is long, and deep, and wide ;
It will carry a host of things,
While dozens of drums hang over the side,
With the sticks sticking under the strings.
And yet not the sound of a drum is heard,
Not a bugle blast is blown,
As he mounts to the chimney-top like a bird,
And drops to the hearth like a stone.

The little red stockings he silently fills,
Till the stockings will hold no more ;
The bright little sleds for the great snow hills
Are quickly set down on the floor.
Then Santa Claus mounts to the roof like a bird,
And glides to his seat in the sleigh ;
Not the sound of a bugle or drum is heard
As he noiselessly gallops away.

He rides to the East, and he rides to the West,
Of his goodies he touches not one ;
He eateth the crumbs of the Christmas feast
When the dear little folks are done.
Old Santa Claus doeth all that he can ;
This beautiful mission is his ;
Then, children, be good to the little old man,
When you find who the little man is.



JEMIMA.

THERE was a little girl, who had a little curl
Right in the middle of her forehead,
And when she was good she was very very good,
But when she was bad she was horrid.*

She stood on her head, on her little truckle-bed,
With nobody by for to hinder ;
She screamed and she squalled, she yelled and she
bawled,
And drummed her little heels against the winder.

Her mother heard the noise, and thought it was the boys
Playing in the empty attic,
She rushed upstairs, and caught her unawares,
And spanked her, most emphatic.

**MR. NOBODY.**

I KNOW a funny little man,
As quiet as a mouse,
Who does the mischief that is done
In everybody's house !
There's no one ever sees his face,
And yet we all agree
That every plate we break was cracked
By Mr. Nobody.

* According to Miss Roosevelt, an American writer, this verse was composed by the poet Longfellow. Who added the other two is not known.

'Tis he who always tears our books,
Who leaves the door ajar,
He pulls the buttons from our shirts,
And scatters pins afar ;
That squeaking door will always squeak
For, prithee, don't you see,
We leave the oiling to be done
By Mr. Nobody.

He puts damp wood upon the fire,
That kettles cannot boil ;
His are the feet that bring in mud,
And all the carpets soil.
The papers always are mislaid,
Who had them last but he ?
There's no one tosses them about
But Mr. Nobody.

The finger-marks upon the door
By none of us are made ;
We never leave the blinds unclosed,
To let the curtains fade.
The ink we never spill, the boots
That lying round you see
Are not our boots ; they all belong
To Mr. Nobody.



SING LULLABY.

UPON my lap my sovereign sits
And sucks upon my breast :
Meantime his love maintains my life
And gives my sense her rest.
Sing lullaby, my little boy,
Sing lullaby, mine only joy !

When thou hast taken thy repast,
Repose, my babe, on me ;
So may thy mother and thy nurse
Thy cradle also be.
Sing lullaby, my little boy,
Sing lullaby, mine only joy !

I grieve that duty doth not work
All that my wishing would,
Because I would not be to thee
But in the best I should.
Sing lullaby, my little boy,
Sing lullaby, mine only joy !

Yet as I am, and as I may,
I must and will be thine,
Though all too little for thyself
Vouchsafing to be mine.
Sing lullaby, my little boy,
Sing lullaby, mine only joy !



DOLLY'S CHRISTENING.

"I'LL be the goodest little girl
That ever you did see,
If you let me take my dolly
To church with you and me.
It's too drefful bad to leave her,
When we's all gone away ;
Oh ! Casette will be so lonesome
To stay at home all day."

'Twas such a pleading pair of eyes,
And winsome little face,
That mamma couldn't well refuse,
Though church was not the place
For doll or playthings, she well knew.
Still mamma's little maid
Was always so obedient,
She didn't feel afraid.

And though Casette had come from France,
She really was quite small,
And could be carried very well
Right under mamma's shawl.
So when they reached the grand old church,
And sat inside the pew,
Casette was placed in Mabel's arms—
Both of them dressed in blue.

No mouse was ever half so still
As this sweet little lass,
Until the sermon was quite through—
Then this did come to pass :

A dozen babies (more or less),
Dressed in long robes of white,
Were brought before the altar-rail—
A flash of heaven's own light.

Then Mabel stood upon the seat,
With dolly held out straight,
And this is what the darling said :
“ Oh, min'ster, please to wait,
And wash my dolly up like that—
Her name it is Casette.”
The “ min'ster ” smiled and bowed his head ;
But mamma blushes yet.



OUR LITTLE QUEEN.

COULD you have seen the violets
That blossomed in her eyes ;
Could you have kissed that golden hair
And drank those holy sighs,
You would have been her tiring-maid
As joyfully as I,—
Content to dress your little queen,
And let the world go by.

Could you have seen those violets
Hide in their graves of snow ;
Drawn all that gold along your hand
While she lay smiling so ;—
O, you would tread this weary earth
As heavily as I !
Content to clasp her little grave,
And let the world go by.

ROCKING BABY BY THE FIRE.

THE earth is full of brightness
For the heart that's strong and gay,
And youth has hours of lightness
That must some time pass away ;
But I cannot mourn their going,
Nor the wealth of their desire,
While I sit in sweetest comfort,
Rocking baby by the fire.

Sometimes the world seems hard and cold,
And often, I confess,
I think its sins are manifold—
Its wrongs need some redress.
Yet, when I turn at evening
My back upon its ire,
I forget about its troubles
Rocking baby by the fire.

They say there is another life
That's better far than this ;
If so, to us is given
A foretaste of its bliss.
I never doubt its holding
All the soul can e'er require ;
But it's pretty close to heaven—
Rocking baby by the fire.



TIRED MOTHERS.

A LITTLE elbow leans upon your knee,
Your tired knee, that has so much to bear ;
A child's dear eyes are looking lovingly
From underneath a thatch of tangled hair.
Perhaps you do not heed the velvet touch
Of warm, moist fingers folding yours so tight ;
You do not prize this blessing overmuch,
You almost are too tired to pray to-night.

But it is a blessedness. A year ago
I did not see it as I do to-day ;
We are so dull and thankless, and too slow
To catch the sunshine till it slips away ;
And now it seems surpassing strange to me,
That while I wore the badge of motherhood,
I did not kiss more oft and tenderly
The little child that brought me only good.

And if, some night when you sit down to rest,
You miss this elbow from your tired knee,
This restless curly head from off your breast,
This lisping tongue that chatters constantly ;
If from your own the dimpled hands had slipped,
And ne'er would nestle in your palm again ;
If the white feet into the grave had tripped,
I could not blame you for your heartache then.

I wonder so that mothers ever fret
At little children clinging to their gown,
Or that the footprints when the days are wet
Are ever black enough to make them frown.

If I could find a little muddy boot,
Or cap or jacket on my chamber floor ;
If I could kiss a rosy, restless foot,
And hear its patter in my home once more ;

If I could mend a broken cart to-day,
To-morrow make a kite to reach the sky,
There is no woman in God's world could say
She was more blissfully content than I.
But, ah ! the dainty pillow next my own,
Is never rumpled by a shining head ;
My singing birdling from its nest is flown—
The little boy I used to kiss is dead.



THE LITTLE KINGS AND QUEENS.

MONARCHS whose kingdom no man bounds,
No leagues uphold, no conquest spreads,
Whose thrones are any mossy mounds,
Whose crowns are curls on sunny heads !

The only sovereigns on the earth
Whose sway is certain to endure ;
No line of kings of kingliest birth
Is of its reigning half so sure.

No fortress built in all the land
So strong they cannot storm it free ;
No palace made too rich, too grand,
For them to roam triumphantly.

No tyrant so hard-hearted known
Can their diplomacy resist ;
They can usurp his very throne ;
He abdicates when he is kissed.

No hovel in the world so small,
So meanly built, so squalid, bare,
They will not go within its wall,
And set their reign of splendour there.

No beggar too forlorn and poor
To give them all they need to thrive ;
They frolic in his yard and door,
The happiest kings and queens alive.

Oh, blessed little kings and queens,
The only sovereigns in the earth !
Their sovereignty nor rests nor leans
On poms of riches or of birth,

Nor ends when cruel death lays low
In dust each little curly head.
All other sovereigns crownless go ;
And are forgotten, when they're dead ;

But these hold changeless empire past,
Triumphant past, all earthly scenes ;
We worship, truest to the last,
The buried " little kings and queens."

*From "Harper's Magazine" for September, 1881,
where it appears unsigned.*



SEND THEM TO BED WITH A KISS.

O MOTHERS, so weary discouraged,
Worn out with the cares of the day,
You often grow cross and impatient,
Complain of the noise and the play ;
For the day brings so many vexations,
So many things going amiss ;
But, mothers, whatever may vex you,
Send the children to bed with a kiss !

The dear little feet wander often,
Perhaps, from the pathway of right,
The dear little hands find new mischief
To try you from morning till night.
But think of the desolate mothers
Who'd give all the world for your bliss,
And, as thanks for your infinite blessings,
Send the children to bed with a kiss !

For some day their noise will not vex you,
The silence will hurt you far more ;
You will long for the sweet children voices,
For a sweet childish face at the door.
And to press a child's face to your bosom,
You'd give all the world just for this ;
For the comfort 'twill bring you in sorrow,
Send the children to bed with a kiss !



THE LITTLE CHILDREN.

God bless the little children :
We meet them everywhere ;
We hear their voices round our hearth,
Their footsteps on the stair ;
Their kindly hearts are swelling o'er
With mirthfulness and glee ;
God bless the little children
Wherever they may be.

We meet them 'neath each gipsy tent,
With visage swarth and dun,
And eyes that sparkle as they glance
With roguery and fun :
We find them fishing in the brook
For minnows with a pin,
Or creeping through the hazel bush
The linnet's nest to win.

We meet them in the lordly hall,
Their stately father's pride ;
We meet them in the poor man's cot—
He has no wealth beside ;
Along the city's crowded street,
They hurl the hoop or ball ;
We find them 'neath the drunkard's roof,
The saddest sight of all.

For there they win no father's love,
No mother's tender care ;
Their only friend the God above,
Who hears the children's prayer.

But dressed in silks or draped in rags,
In childish grief or glee,
God bless the little children
Wherever they may be.



NOTES OF AUTHORS

ADAMS, CHARLES FOLLEN (American), born at Dorchester, Mass., in 1842, commenced writing in 1872 his well-known German-American poems, and four years later contributed to the *Detroit Free Press* his widely celebrated "Leedle Yawcob Strauss." He has published in book form *Leedle Yawcob Strauss and other Poems*, and *Dialect Ballads*.

AKERS, ELIZABETH (American), a native of Franklin County, Me., born in 1832, in 1860 was married to Paul Akers, the sculptor, who died the following year. Subsequently she became the wife of Mr. E. M. Allen of New York. For a time she wrote under the pseudonym of "Florence Percy." Her popular poem, "Rock me to Sleep," has been claimed by others, whose persistency can be explained only by the theory of kleptomania.

ALDRICH, THOMAS BAILEY (American), whose beautiful poem of "Baby Bell" is known everywhere, was born in Portsmouth, N. H., in 1836. After pursuing for a time a mercantile vocation in a New York counting-house, he became connected with the *Home Journal*. In 1881 was appointed editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Has published *Pampinea and other Poems*, *Poems, Cloth of Gold, Flower and Thorn, Lyrics and Sonnets, Marjorie Daw and other People, Prudence and Palfrey, The Stillwater Tragedy*, and many subsequent works, in prose and verse. The cultivated circle he addresses has for many years been one of wide extension.

ALLEN, E. C. A., perhaps Elizabeth Akers, who latterly became Mrs. Allen.

ALLINGHAM, WILLIAM (1824-1889), a native of Ballyshannon, in Ireland, removed to England and obtained an appointment in the Customs. For several years edited *Fraser's Magazine*. Published *Day and Night Songs, The Music Master and other Poems, In Fairy Land, Songs, Ballads, and Stories, The Fairies, Rhymes for the Young*, and quite as many more works.

ASHE, THOMAS (1836-1889), one of the masters at Leamington College in 1865, subsequently at Queen Elizabeth's College, Ipswich. Wrote several volumes of poetry (collected in 1885).

BARNES, WILLIAM (1801-1886), clergyman, poet, and philologist, was a native of Bagber in Dorsetshire. Published, among other works, *Poems of Rural Life in Dorset Dialect*, *An Anglo-Saxon Delectus*, *Views of Labour and Gold*, and *Rural Poems in Common English*.

BENNETT, WILLIAM COX (1820-1895), born at Greenwich, was author of *Poems*, *Verdicts*, *War Songs*, *Collected Poems*, *Songs for Sailors*, etc.

BLAKE, WILLIAM (1757-1827), an artist and poet alike of fantastic fancy, was the son of a London hosier. He produced a great variety of works, many of which now command high prices. The principal are, *Songs of Innocence*, *Vision of the Daughters of Albion*, *The Gates of Paradise*, and *Illustrations to the Book of Job*. An undoubted genius, he was yet often extremely poor, but fond of children, he retained a child's heart to the last, and his poems of child life, written with absolute sincerity, possess infinite tenderness.

BLIND, MATHILDE (1841-1896), was a widely known writer of power and discrimination, published *Tarantella*, *The Heather on Fire*, *The Ascent of Man*, *Dramas in Miniature*, *Songs and Sonnets*, *Birds of Passage*, and quite a number of intermediate works.

BRETON, NICHOLAS (1555-1624), supposed to have been of a Staffordshire family, was an approved writer chiefly of pastorals, sonnets, canzons, and madrigals.

BREWER, LL. D., EBENEZER COBHAM (1810-1897), known everywhere as the editor of the *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. But the little poem here set to his credit, because it appears elsewhere under his name, has been printed also as the work of Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood, the American poetess.

BROUGH, ROBERT B. (1820-1860), said to have practised as a portrait painter in Manchester, wrote in conjunction with his brother William, a series of burlesques, played with some success at the London theatres.

BROWNE, R. A. (American). Her poem here has, deservedly, been widely admired for nearly half a century.

BROWNING, ELIZABETH BARRETT, born in London in 1806, married Robert Browning, the poet, in 1846, and died in Florence in 1861. She began to write in prose and verse at the age of ten, and at seventeen published a volume of poems. The dozen and more works which followed, including *The Romaunt of the Page*; *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, *Aurora Leigh*, and *Last Poems*, issued the year after her death, are so well known as to render enumeration of them unnecessary. To the children Mrs. Browning gave her best, and "The Cry of the Children" is of all her poems perhaps the best known.

BROWNING, ROBERT (1812-1889), had he written only "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," would not have been without fame as a poet. Among all the poems embraced in the more than thirty volumes from his pen, there is no other that has given so much genuine delight to young hearts.

BRYANT, WILLIAM CULLEN (1794-1878), the first American poet of celebrity, was a native of Cummington, Mass., who wrote remarkable verse at the age of thirteen. His celebrated poem, *Thanatopsis*, was published before he was twenty. His subsequent poems include *The Fountain and other Poems*, *The White-footed Deer and other Poems*, and an edition of his *Complete Poetical Works*. Bryant's power of work, says Dr. Bellows, never abated; and the herculean translation of Homer, which was the amusement of the last lustre of his life, showed not only no senility, but no decrease of intellectual or physical endurance. This was published at Boston as late as 1870.

"CARROLL, LEWIS," was the pseudonym of the Rev. Charles Litwidge Dodgson (1832-1898), so widely known as the author of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*, both illustrated by Sir John Tenniel.

CARY, ALICE (American), born 1820, died 1871, began writing for newspapers and magazines before she was sixteen. In 1850 a volume of poems, written by her in conjunction with her sister Phœbe, appeared, edited by Griswold. A year later the sisters moved together from their father's farm in Cincinnati, O., to the city of New York, where they henceforth supported themselves by their literary efforts, and wrote poems and novels indicating rare poetical sensibility.

CIBBER, COLLEY (1671-1757), appointed poet-laureate in 1730, had considerable success both as an actor and a writer of plays. His *Apology for His Own Life* has been esteemed as one of the most entertaining autobiographies in the language. Cibber was severely satirized by Pope in *The Dunciad*.

COLERIDGE, HARTLEY (1791-1849), the eldest son of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, inherited much of his father's genius, as well as some of his defects of organization and temperament. He is esteemed chiefly for his sonnets, but his child songs here are not less the dust of pure gold.

COLERIDGE, SAMUEL TAYLOR (1772-1834), the son of a Devonshire vicar, was left an orphan at nine, and became a pupil of Christ's Hospital, where he had Charles Lamb for a school-fellow. With the publication of the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, in 1798, he set himself at once in the front rank of imaginative poets. *Christobel*, in 1816, greatly enhanced his reputation. His other works include *The Fall of Robespierre*, *Poems*, *Lay Sermons*, and *Aids to Reflection*. Settling with his family at Keswick, in Cumberland, in the opening year of last century, Coleridge, with Southey and Wordsworth, established what has been known since as the Lake School of poetry. A dreamer of poetic dreams, a great thinker, a great critic, a great talker, Coleridge's fame has suffered no diminution since his death.

COLLINS, MORTIMER (1827-1876), a native of Plymouth, was the author of fourteen moderately successful novels; and, in poetry, of *Idyls and Rhymes*, *Summer Songs*, and *The Inn of Strange Meetings and Other Poems*. He was besides a frequent contributor to *Punch* and other prosperous periodicals. "I should grow very weary of life," he wrote, "if I did not feel that I have God for a friend."

"COOLIDGE, SUSAN," is the pen-name of Sarah Chauncey Woolsey, born at Cleveland, O., America, in 1845, who has contributed poems and sketches to newspapers and magazines, and is the author of several volumes in prose and verse.

COTTON, NATHANIEL (1705-1788), physician and poet, lived at St. Albans from 1740, and published *Visions in Verse*. Cowper, the poet, was his patient, and bears testimony to his "well-known humanity and sweetness of temper."

CRAIK, MRS. DINAH MARIA (1826-1887), gained considerable literary distinction under her maiden name of Dinah Maria Mulock. She was a native of Stoke-upon-Trent, in Staffordshire, and her first novel, *The Ogilvies*, appeared in 1849, whilst *John Halifax, Gentleman*, the most popular of all her fictions, came out in 1857. Her poems and songs—collected in 1880, under the title of *Thirty Years, Poems New and Old*, and republished, with additions, in 1888, under the title of *Poems*—embrace notably, in addition to the very admirable pieces here presented, her widely popular song of "Rothesay Bay." Miss Mulock became the wife of Mr. George Lillie Craik, a partner of the firm of Messrs. Macmillan & Co., the famous London publishers, in 1865.

DICKINSON, CHARLES M. (American), born at Lowville, N. Y., in 1842, has been United States Consul-General to Turkey since 1897. He published *The Children and Other Verses* in 1889, when his claim to the authorship of the widely esteemed poem here set to his credit was satisfactorily established.

DOBSON, HENRY AUSTIN, born at Plymouth in 1840, entered Board of Trade in 1856, and has remained there ever since. Has published *Vignettes in Rhyme*, *Proverbs in Porcelain*, *Old-World Idylls*, *At the Sign of the Lyre*, etc.

DODGE, H. C. (American), resides in New York, and contributes ingenious verse nearly every week to the *Detroit Free Press*, or some other paper.

DODGE, MARY MAPES (American), who was born in New York in 1838, and died there in September this year (1905), had been editor of *St. Nicholas Magazine* since it started in November, 1873. She published several volumes of verse, including *Rhymes and Jingles for Little Folk* and *When Life is Young*. Her *Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates*, especially, enjoyed a wide popularity.

DOUDNEY, SARAH, a native of Portsmouth, born in 1843, began to write very young, contributing in prose and verse to many magazines. She has published about a dozen novels, several being written specially for girls. Many of her little poems have been deservedly much admired.

"ELIOT, GEORGE," the pseudonym of Marian C. Evans, born in Warwickshire in 1820, and known everywhere as the authoress of *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, *Romola*, *Felix Holt*, *Middlemarch*, and *Daniel Deronda*. Of poetry she published two volumes: *The Spanish Gipsy*—a drama in blank verse, interspersed with short lyrical pieces—and *The Legend of Infal and Other Poems*. But her reputation as a novelist far exceeds what she has won by her verse.

FARMER, EDWARD. I can discover no biographical particulars of this author, although he has certainly produced a poem which has moved the lower working classes all over the country more than any other effusion in the same line that has issued from the pen of any English poet during the last fifty years. It is still commonly acted in tableau in the penny "geggies" at country fairs in Scotland as well as England. I saw it so produced, indeed, not long ago in Glasgow.

FIELD, EUGENE (1850-1895), was the laureate of the American nursery. Born in St. Louis, he entered early on the profession of journalism, and for the last ten years of his life was attached to the *Chicago Daily News* as a humorous and satirical writer. His child songs—the most charming of their class—are found in four volumes published by Scribner & Son, New York—*A Little Book of Western Verse*, *Second Book of Verse*, *With Trumpet and Drum*, and *Love Songs of Childhood*. A selection from these, with others, since the poet's death, has been issued by John Lane of the Bodley Head, London, under the title of *Lullabyland*, illustrated by Charles Robinson.

FOSS, SAM WALTER (American), born in New Hampshire in 1858, resides in Boston, and edits *The Yankee Blade*.

GALE, NORMAN, poet and reviewer, who was born at Kew in 1862, and resides in Rugby, is author of *A Country Muse*, *Orchard Songs*, *Cricket Songs*, *Songs for Little People*, and *More Cricket Songs*. His *Songs for Little People* are such as can scarcely fail in their appeal to little people.

GOSSE, EDMUND, LL.D., translator to the Board of Trade since 1875, was born in London in 1849. In addition to numerous works in prose, and besides acting as editor of Heinemann's International Library, he has published in verse, *On Viol and Flute*, *King Erik*, *New Poems*, *Firdansi in Exile*, *In Russet and Silver*, and *Collected Poems*.

GREENWOOD, FREDERICK, the Grand Old Man of the London press, and well-known publicist, was the originator and first editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and, later, founded the *St. James's Gazette*, which he also edited for several years. The beautiful little poem printed over Mr. Greenwood's name here, and which has been copied and re-copied, first appeared, he tells me, in the *Cornhill Magazine* more than forty years ago.

HAMILTON, A. CHARLES, a contributor to *Chambers's Journal*; resides in London.

HASTINGS, LADY FLORA (1806-1839), Lady of the bed-chamber to the Duchess of Kent, was the subject of a Court scandal in the year 1839. Her collected poems appeared in 1841.

HAWKER, ROBERT STEPHEN (1803-1875), poet and antiquary, a native of Plymouth, was for more than forty years vicar of Merwenstow, in Cornwall. His published works include *Echoes from Old Cornwall*, *The Quest of the Sangraal*, and *Cornish Ballads*. Hawker's spirited little lyric, written in his twenty-second year, which has for its burden—

“ And have they fixed the where and when?
And shall Trelawny die?
Here's twenty thousand Cornish men
Will know the reason why ! ”

was praised by Scott, Macaulay, and Dickens, under the persuasion that it was an ancient song on the subject. Dickens afterwards revealed the paternity in *Household Words*.

HAY, HON. COL. JOHN, American Secretary of State since 1898 until his death recently (1905), was a native of Salem, Indiana, and was born in 1838. He was one of President Lincoln's private secretaries during the war, and American Ambassador to this country in 1897-98. His poems, contributed originally to *Harper's Magazine*, *Harper's Weekly*, and the *New York Tribune* (to which he was attached for a time in an editorial capacity), were collected and published under the title of *Pike County Ballads*, in 1871.

HAYNE, PAUL HAMILTON (American), born at Charleston, S. C., in 1831, is a frequent contributor to the leading magazines, and has published several volumes of lyrical and dramatic poetry.

HEMANS, FELICIA DOROTHEA (1793-1835), born in Liverpool, died in the house of her brother, Major Browne, in Dublin. She saw many volumes of her poems through the press, and few among her contemporaries produced so much that yet strongly appeals to the young.

HERRICK, ROBERT (1591-1674), the son of a London goldsmith, was educated for the Church, and obtained from Charles I. the living of Dean Prior, in Devonshire. The vein of his poetry, when he is at his best, is of a high quality.

HOOD, THOMAS (1798-1845), the son of a London bookseller, of whom it is enough to say that he wrote "The Song of the Shirt," which, by-the-by, appeared originally in *Punch* in the year 1844.

HOUGHTON, LORD (Richard Monckton Milnes), born in 1809, died in 1885, was esteemed in his time as the efficient supporter of all measures offering social amelioration and reform. His published works include *Poems of Many Years*, *Poetry for the People*, and *Poems, Legendary and Historical*.

HOWITT, MARY (1804-1888), of Quaker descent, maiden name Botham, born at Uttoxeter, was married to William Howitt in 1823, and the same year husband and wife published in conjunction *The Forest Minstrel*, a series of poems. Many works followed which were the production of their individual pens. There can be no surer proof of the genuineness of the poetical powers possessed by Mary Howitt, and her wisdom in the choice of subject, than the fact that so many of her pieces have found favour with editors of school books. Her very name, indeed, in this connection brings magic with it.

HUNT, LEIGH (1784-1859), born at Southgate and educated at Christ's Hospital, London. In connection with his brother established the *Examiner* newspaper, and for having called the Prince Regent "an Adonis of fifty," the editors together were condemned to two years' imprisonment, with a fine of £500 each. This sentence caused Hunt to become very popular and to receive the sympathy of Byron, Lamb, Keats, Shelley, and Moore. His voluminous works in prose and verse are well known.

JONSON, BEN (1574-1637), the friend of Shakespeare—ten years his senior, and living twenty-one years after the great dramatist was dead—was born in Westminster,

and had the honour of burial in Westminster Abbey. The flag-stone covering his clay in the North Aisle has been inscribed by a familiar friend with the unique epitaph—"O Rare Ben Jonson!" 'Tis enough.

KING, MRS. HAMILTON, an accomplished poetess, living in London, has published *Aspromonte and Other Poems, The Disciples, A Book of Dreams, Ballads of the North*, and other volumes.

LAMB, CHARLES (1775-1834), born in London, died at Edmonton. By his series of essays signed "Elia," originally contributed to the *London Magazine*, and first published in collected form in 1823, has earned for himself a foremost place amongst British Essayists. His poetical writings are not numerous; but what he wrote in verse, even as what he wrote in prose, exhibits genuine taste and culture. His sister Mary was joint author with him of *Poetry for Children*.

LAMB, MARY (1764-1847), besides working with her brother on *Poetry for Children*, assisted him earlier in writing *Tales from Shakespeare*—she dealing, curiously, with the comedies, Charles with the tragedies.

LANDOR, WALTER SAVAGE (1775-1864), poet and miscellaneous writer, sprang out of a family in wealthy circumstances in Warwickshire, is best remembered by his *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen*, written between 1820 and 1830, though as a poet he often reveals genuine power and high literary culture.

LOCKER-LAMPSON, FREDERICK (1821-1895), known till late in life as Frederick Locker, was author of *London Lyrics*, a volume of *vers de société* which has passed through several editions. He also edited *Lyra Elegantiarum*.

LONGFELLOW, HENRY WADSWORTH (1807-1882), America's most voluminous poet, whose works are as familiar, and no less admired, in Britain than in his native land. His poems of child life are among the most tender and touching that have been produced anywhere.

LOWELL, JAMES RUSSELL (1819-1891), appointed American Minister at the Court of St. James in 1880, was the first editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and afterwards edited the *North American Review*. Wrote and published *A Year's Life*, *Among My Books*, *Under the Willows*, *My Study Windows*, and many other excellent and delectable volumes in prose and verse.

LUCAS, EDWARD VERRALL, author and publisher's reader, born in 1868, has been connected with the *London Globe*, and is now on the staff of *Punch*. *A Book of Verses for Children*, as well as other books for children, have come from his pen, while he has edited various works. Of *Wisdom While You Wait* he is joint author with Mr. C. L. Graves.

LYTTON, LORD (1805-1873), previous to his elevation to the peerage, known as Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer, wrote verses at an early age, and published his first volume, consisting of boyish rhymes, before he was sixteen. Afterwards he sought and won distinction in poetry, in drama, in historical romance, in the domestic novel, in the ethical essay, and in political disquisitions. His plays, *The Lady of Lyons*, *Richelieu*, and *Money*, still hold their place on the stage.

MASSEY, GERALD, born at Gamble Wharf, near Tring, in Hertfordshire, in 1828, lives in Surrey, and is the esteemed author of nearly a dozen volumes of engaging verse, which include—*Poems and Chansons*, *Voices of Freedom and Lyrics of Love*, *The Ballad of Babe Christobel and Other Poems*, and *Poems: Old and New*.

MATHAMS, WALTER J., for some time pastor of the Wycliffe Church in Birmingham, for a season an army chaplain, and at present holding a charge in the Church of Scotland—is a hymn-writer, having the honour of a place in Julian's standard biographical *Dictionary of Hymnology*, as also in that of Dr. Burbage in America. He has published, besides, *Jack Ahoy!* a book for sailors, and *Comrades All*, written at the request of Lord Roberts and prefaced by him. Also, *Please, it's Only Me*, and *Other Ballad Rhymes* (1904).

MEREDITH, GEORGE, the well-known novelist and poet, born in Hampshire in 1828.

MILLER, JOAQUIN (American), born in Wabash, Indiana, in 1841, like Bret Harte, has been Californian gold-miner, express messenger, editor, and author. It was while judge of Oregon County, in the later sixties, that he began his literary career, and his *Songs of the Sierras* quickly found him a reputation both at home and abroad.

MILTON, JOHN (1608-1674). The "Hymn on the Nativity," one of the noblest of all the works of this immortal author, and perhaps the finest lyric in the English language, was composed about December, 1629, when the poet was twenty-one years old.

MORRIS, SIR LEWIS, born in Carmarthen, South Wales, in 1833, graduated at Oxford with the highest classical honours in 1855, studied law, and practised at Lincoln's Inn till 1872. His *Songs of Two Worlds*—in three series—appeared in 1872, 1874, and 1875. More than half-a-dozen subsequent volumes of verse have given proof of the rare quality of his cultured imagination.

NOEL, HON. RODEN (1834-1894), the third son of the Earl of Gainsborough, by a series of poems called *A Child's Monument*, composed within the year that succeeded a little son's death, has established for himself an enduring claim to remembrance. He died at Mainz, whence he had gone in pursuit of health.

O'KEEFFE, ADELAIDE (1776-1855), daughter of John O'Keeffe, the comic dramatist, joined Ann and Jane Taylor in the composition of *Original Poems*, contributing twenty-four pieces, some of which are among the most sprightly in the volume.

OPIE, MRS. AMELIA (1769-1853), poetess and novelist, whose works are embraced in several volumes, was the intimate friend of Sydney Smith, as well as of Sheridan, Madame de Staël, and Lady Cook.

PALGRAVE, FRANCIS TURNER (1824-1897), assistant private secretary for a time to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, published several volumes of poems under the pseudonym of Henry T. Thurston, but is best known as the editor of the *Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems in the English Language* (Macmillan & Co.), which has run through several editions, and is a tasteful and judicious collection.

PARTRIDGE, SAMUEL WILLIAM, born in London in 1810, became a publisher, having his establishment in Pater-noster Row. A collection of his poems is entitled *Voices from the Garden, or the Christian Language of Flowers*, and his really admirable and well-known poem, "Not to Myself Alone," has often been quoted with effect from the pulpit.

PEACOCK, THOMAS LOVE (1785-1866), a native of Weymouth, wrote *Headlong Hall*, *Melin Court*, *Nightmare Abbey*, etc. His chief poems were *Palmyra* and *The Genius of the Thames*. Peacock held an appointment in the India House, but found his best relaxation in literature.

PECK, SAMUEL MINTURN (American), born at Tuska-loosa, Ala., in 1854, writes poems and stories for the American periodicals, and is the author of many popular lyrics, among which his "Grape Vine Swing" and the Yale College song, "The Knot of Blue," are the best known.

PIATT, MRS. SARAH MORGAN BRYAN (American), born at Lexington, Ky., in 1836, is a well-known contributor to magazines and newspapers. Her published works embrace *A Woman's Poems*, *Poems in Company with Children*, and nearly a dozen more volumes.

PIERPONT, JOHN (American), who was born at Litch-field, Conn., in 1785, and died at Washington, in 1866, where he had been employed for some years in the Treasury Department, wrote many hymns and odes revealing fine literary culture. His first poetical venture, *The Airs of Palestine*, brought him immediately into fame.

PRAED, WINTHROP MACKWORTH (1802-1839), a native of London, while at Eton started the College magazine, *The Etonian*, and proved himself the very life of a work of remarkable performance. His poems, all sprightly, original, and witty, have afforded suggestion and stimulation to many subsequent writers of occasional verse.

PRIOR, MATTHEW (1664-1721), born in London, of humble parents, rose to be Ambassador to the Court of Versailles, but owed his advancement in life entirely to the friendship of the Earl of Dorset. His best known poems are light lyrical pieces of the artificial school.

PROCTOR, ADELAIDE ANNE (1825-1864), born in London, and who will be remembered as the author of "The Lost Chord," had her earliest poems accepted by Charles Dickens for *Household Words*. A well-known collection of her verses, *Legends and Lyrics*, appeared in 1858. She was the "golden-tressed Adelaide," as might be guessed, of her father's poem in this collection, and merited, evidently, all its tender love and admiration. Describing her as a child about eight, Mr. N. P. Willis, the American poet, calls her "a beautiful girl, delicate, gentle, and pensive, as if she was born on the lip of Castaly and knew she was a poet's daughter."

PROCTOR, BRYAN WALLER (1787-1874), better known in literature by the pseudonym of "Barry Cornwall," was born in London, where he also died. In addition to several volumes of poems and other works, he wrote biographies of Kean and Lamb and edited Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. Some of his shorter lyrical poems have been deservedly much admired.

RANDS, WILLIAM BRIGHTLY (1823-1882), has been called the "laureate of the English Nursery." He wrote under the pseudonyms of "Henry Holbeach" and "Matthew Browne." In his early career he had a hard struggle with poverty, but in time became a reporter in the House of Commons, and got into connection with various periodicals, to which he contributed the best of his fairy tales and poems for children. His permanent works are *Lilliput Lavee* and *Lilliput Lectures*.

RAYNE, MRS. MARTHA L., a native of Halifax, N. S., has for many years been on the editorial staff of the *Detroit Free Press*. She has published several novels, and contributes poems to the *Century Magazine*.

REALF, RICHARD (1834-1878), the "most unhappy man of men," as he has been called, was a native of Uckfield, Sussex, and while a youth of eighteen in Brighton, exhibited such cultured facility in verse as to win high praise from Thackeray, Lytton, and Lady Byron. After a life of much misery, due to an unfortunate marriage, he died by his own hand in Oakland, California. He had lived more than twenty years in America.

RICHARDS, LAURA ELIZABETH (American), born in Boston in 1850, has published *In My Nursery*, *The Hurdy-Gurdy*, and many more volumes in verse or in prose.

RILEY, JAMES WHITCOMB, born in Indiana in 1854, is the author of more than a dozen volumes of poems, which are more widely read and enjoyed than are the works of perhaps any other American poet. Individual poems from his pen, such as "The Old Swimmin'-Hole," "Jim," and "Little Orphant Annie," have made his name scarcely less familiar on this side the Atlantic.

ROSCOE, WILLIAM (1753-1831), born in Liverpool, became an attorney in his native city. At the age of sixteen he commenced to write poetry, and composed *Mount Pleasant*. Later, he published *The Nurse*. He was author, besides, of the lives of Lorenza de' Medici and Pope Leo the Tenth, and of numerous lesser works, embracing pamphlets on political subjects. For a time he represented Liverpool in Parliament.

ROSSETTI, CHRISTINA (1830-1894), born in London, sister of the great Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and one of the tenderest and truest of English poetesses. Her works are embraced in a number of volumes. She was for many years an invalid. A complete edition of her poetical works has, since her death, been published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co.

SAXE, JOHN GODFREY (1816-1887), one of the most popular of the humorous poets of America, was born at Highgate, Vt. He was bred to the law, and became an ardent politician, holding for a time the position of State Attorney for Cheltenham, Vt. Many of his poems, serious as well as humorous, were contributed to *Harper's Magazine* and to the *Atlantic Monthly*.

SCOTT, WILLIAM BELL (1811-1890), poet and painter, published five volumes of verse, the best of which is of a mystical and metaphysical character. He edited, also, a series of the English poets, which is known as "Bell's Series."

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM (1564-1616). "Nature herself was proud of his designs."

SHELLEY, PERCY BYSSHE (1792-1822). Unsurpassed in genius among English lyric poets. Shelley, the son of a baronet, was born at his father's seat, near Horsham, in Sussex. When he had not quite completed his twenty-ninth year, he was drowned in a storm which he encountered in his yacht on the Gulf of Spezia. In obedience to his own desire, his body, when thrown ashore, was burned—under the direction of Lord Byron and other friends—and the ashes were carried to Rome and buried beside the grave of Keats, in the Protestant cemetery, beneath the shadow of the Pyramid.

SHENSTONE, WILLIAM (1714-1763), was born in Shropshire, where his father owned the small estate of the Leasowes. He was a pleasant, but not vigorous writer in either prose or verse. His poem of "The Schoolmistress," said to have been written when he was a youth at college, is the best known of his works.

SIGOURNEY, MAJOR W. A. H. (American), a nephew of the well-known poetess of the same name. Immediately after his tragic death in 1870, it was claimed for him by his numerous friends that he had written the poem of "Beautiful Snow," and that his sadly abandoned wife, who had left him to pursue a career of shame, was its subject.

SOUTHEY, CAROLINE B. (1786-1854), maiden name Caroline Anne Bowles, was born at Buckland, Hants. She lost her parents when young, and in her country retirement cultivated literature successfully. In 1839 she married Robert Southey, the poet-laureate, with whom she had long been well acquainted. There is an original vein of pathos distinguishing her poems. Her life, she tells, was uneventful; for "all her adventures were by the fireside or in her garden, and almost all her migrations from the blue bed to the brown."

SOUTHEY, ROBERT (1774-1843), the son of a linen-draper in Bristol, was intended for the ministry, but disqualified himself for Oxford by adopting, like Coleridge, Unitarian views in religion and republican in politics. In 1803 he settled himself in a house called Greta Hall, near Keswick, and from thence became associated with Wordsworth and Coleridge. In 1813 he was appointed poet-laureate, chiefly through the influence of Sir Walter Scott, who himself declined the place. Above a hundred volumes in all testify to Southey's diligence as an author. But except for the little poem of "The Battle of Blenheim," he is to-day almost unknown as a poet.

SOUTHWELL, ROBERT (1560-1595), was born near Norwich, and was educated at Paris two years, after which he went to Rome, and was received, at the age of seventeen, into the order of Jesuits. From Rome he was sent as a missionary to England, and became attached to the household of the Countess of Arundel, who perished in the Tower. In 1592, when going to celebrate Mass, Southwell was seized and thrown into prison, where during three years he was subjected to the tortures of the rack no less than ten times. Eventually, in 1595, the Court of King's Bench condemned him as being a Catholic priest. The result was that he was drawn to Tyburn on a hurdle, was hanged, and had his heart burnt in sight of the people. Southwell left several volumes of poems, notably *A Fourre-fould Meditation*, containing "The Burning Babe," admired by Ben Jonson.

STANTON, FRANK LEBBY (American), born at Charlestown, C. S., in 1857, contributes to the leading magazines, and gives public readings from his own poems. He is author of *Songs from Dixieland*, published in 1900, and *Up from Georgia*, issued in 1902.

TADEMA, MISS LAURENCE ALMA, is the daughter of Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema, R.A., and besides two novels—*Love's Martyr* and *The Wings of Icarus*—she is authoress of two volumes of poems, *Realms of Unknown Kings* and *Songs of Womanhood*. It is from the last named work—recently published—that her very charming poem "A Blessing for the Blessed," is quoted, by kind permission.

TAYLOR, ANN (1782-1866), was a native of London, though brought up chiefly at Larenham, in Suffolk. Jointly with her sister Jane, Ann produced *Original Poems for Infant Minds*. The sisters also wrote *Hymns for Infant Minds*, which were very popular. Indeed, Ann's poem "My Mother," has been declared the most popular poem in the English language.

TAYLOR, JANE (1783-1824), sister of the above. Her little poem, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," is not likely ever to become obsolete in the nursery.

TENNYSON, ALFRED LORD (1809-1892), poet-laureate from 1850 till the date of his death, and whose name will survive as the author of *In Memoriam* and *Idylls of the King*.

TENNYSON-TURNER, CHARLES (1808-1879), the elder brother of the author of *In Memoriam*, jointly with whom he wrote *Poems by Two Brothers*, published in 1827, when the one was nineteen, and the other only seventeen years old. Charles, who after leaving college, assumed his grandmother's name of Turner, took holy orders, and became vicar of Grasby. His poetical fame rests chiefly on his sonnets, which are invariably of a high order.

TRENCH, RICHARD CHENEVIX (1807-1886), born in Dublin, was made Dean of Westminster in 1856, and Archbishop of Dublin in 1864. He published several volumes of verse, notably of a didactic character.

TUTTLE, MRS. EMMA (American), whose maiden name was Reed, was born at Braceville, Trumbull County, O., in 1839. She has published two volumes of poems, and as a public reader and elocutionist, has won a high reputation in the Western States.

VAUGHAN, HENRY (1622-1695), a native of Wales, studied at Oxford, and first became a lawyer, and then a physician; but in neither profession was he successful. He made more than fair success, however, as a poet, and his little poem "The Retreat," has been much admired.

WATTS, ISAAC (1674-1748), born at Southampton, and the son of Protestant dissenters, who had suffered severely for their faith during the arbitrary times of Charles II. Watts was the author of some eight hundred hymns, generally of little account in a literary respect, though many of them still, and will long, maintain a highly honoured place among devotional effusions.

WESTWOOD, THOMAS (1814-), has produced *Beads from a Rosary*, *The Burden of the Bell*, *Berries and Blossoms*, and *The Quest of the Sanegreal*. "Little Bell," his most popular poem, appeared in the *Athenæum*, when the editor remarked—"Though the writer is a childless man, he has a love and reverence for childhood which can scarcely be surpassed."

WHITTIER, JOHN GREENLEAF, the American Quaker-poet, known everywhere as the author of "Maud Muller," was a native of Haverhill, Mass., and was born in 1807. His poetical writings are embraced in nearly a dozen volumes, including *Songs of Labour*, *The Chapel of the Hermits*, *Home Ballads*, *In War Time*, and *Among the Hills*, etc. Whittier resided the greater part of his life at Amesbury, Mass. He never married, and his long life was almost wholly devoted to literary pursuits,

WILLIS, NATHANIEL PARKER (American), was born in Portland, Me., in 1806, and died near Cornwall-on-the-Hudson, N.Y., in 1867. His fame as a writer of prose

exceeds that of his fame as a poet. The little piece printed over his name in this volume has, however, been deservedly much admired.

WITHER, GEORGE (1588-1667), a native of Hampshire, and a prolific writer. In 1613 he was imprisoned in the Marshalsea for the authorship of a satire entitled *Abuses stript and Whipt*. He was a Royalist under Charles I., but changed his politics, and, having sold his estate, raised a troop of horse for the Parliament. Taken prisoner by the Royalists in 1642, he is said to have owed his life to Sir John Denham, who requested the King not to hang Wither, because, while he lived, Denham would not be accounted the worst poet in England.

WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM (1770-1850), a native of Cockermouth, and poet-laureate from 1843 (when Southey died) until his death, when the bays passed to Tennyson—who accepted them with a feeling of pride, as coming “from the brow of him whose lips had uttered nothing base.” Referring to his sublime “Ode on the Intimations of Immortality,” Wordsworth wrote:—“I do not profess to give a literal representation of the state of the affections and of the moral being in childhood. I record my own feelings at that time—my absolute spirituality—my *all-soulness*, if I may so speak. At that time I could not believe that I should lie down quietly in the grave, and that my body should moulder into dust.” Elsewhere he says:—“I took hold of the notion of pre-existence as having sufficient foundation in humanity for authorizing me to make for my purpose, the best use I could as a poet.”



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